GEORGE HERBERT AND HIS TIMES

BY A. G. HYDE

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GEORGE HERBERT AND HIS TIMES

GEORGE HERBERT

FROM THE 1674 EDITION OF *THE TEMPLE*, THE FIRST PUBLISHED WITH HIS PORTRAIT

GEORGE HERBERT AND HIS TIMES

BY

A. G. HYDE

WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO THE

Rev. HENRY MONTAGU BUTLER, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

(OF WHICH GEORGE HERBERT WAS A FELLOW)

PREFACE

THE chief, if not the only, source of information for a biography of George Herbert is the well-known *Life* by Izaak Walton, first published in 1670. Apart from this, and a brief memorial included by Barnabas Oley in his Preface to *The Country Parson* (1652), the materials in question consist of hardly more than a few official records. For this reason Walton's pages, familiar as they are to many, have been largely drawn from in the following chapters; and if in many places the quotations are of some length, this has seemed better than to attempt what could only be an obvious paraphrase of the text. Indeed, it must be frankly admitted that the labours of a modern biographer of Herbert are reduced to little more than a commentary on Walton's narrative, except when, as in the present instance, an effort has been made to show the relation of its subject and his

writings to his own and later times. An acknowledgment must also be made of the conveniences afforded by the Rev. A. B. Grosart's complete edition of Herbert's works in the Fuller Worthies Library; while the materials for the chapter dealing with Nicholas Ferrar and his household have been derived mainly from Professor Mayor's edition of the *Two Lives* (1855).

The author's thanks are due to the Very Rev. J. Armitage Robinson, D.D., Dean of Westminster, for useful particulars as to the Abbey services in Herbert's boyhood; to Mr. John Sargeaunt, author of *Annals of Westminster School*, for valuable information as to the Poet's school-days; to Dr. J. E. Sandys, Public Orator of the University of Cambridge, for interesting details respecting the office formerly held by the Poet; to the Rev. H. B. Maling, Vicar of Leighton Bromswold, for information concerning the Church rebuilt by Herbert and his friends; and to other persons for help given or proferred in his undertaking.

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GEORGE HERBERT AND HIS TIMES

CHAPTER I

THE POET AND THE AGE

AMONG the English poets who wrote more or less on religious themes in the early and middle years of the seventeenth century, a group including Crashaw, Vaughan, Wither, Herrick (in his *Musæ Graviores*) and Quarles of the *Emblems*—Milton for several reasons need not be considered—George Herbert must be allowed a very high, if not the highest, place. Comparison of religious as of other poets is always difficult: we like or dislike them as our intellectual or theological tastes enforce; but for the most part they draw from wells of experience too deep for our common sounding, and if they refresh us in the moral and material conflict of the world we should accept the draught thankfully. Especially ought we to do so when it is offered us with the peculiar grace of this accomplished scholar and gentleman.

The scion of a noble house, distinguished in academic if not in public life, and for some time in no derogatory sense a courtier, what motive but a generous one has he for concerning himself with our welfare? To us as to his contemporaries there is something singularly attractive in his personality: in the tall, slender figure in canonical habit, for which a Court dress and sword have but lately been exchanged, and in the long and grave yet kindly face under the round skull-cap, framed in flowing locks and wearing the thinned moustache of the clergy as well as laity of his day. Though a priest and High Churchman of the school of Andrewes and Laud, he is himself married; he does not forbid wine, up to the third glass; and he admits of mirth, duly pruned of its superfluities. His message is frankly evangelical, affectionate, and stimulating. His book, "humbly, doubtfully offered," as Dr. Macdonald says, is a sermon, or series of sermons, in rhyme, and addressed to young persons, particularly to those whom Milton would have called the "choicest and hopefullest wits" of his own and later generations:—

> Thou whose sweet youth and early hopes enhance
> Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure,
> Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance
> Rhyme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure:
> A verse may find him who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice.

The device is an old one on the part of the religious "verser," and in his own century it proved successful; *The Temple* of "holy Mr. Herbert," like *The Christian Year* of Keble in the century just past, becoming a popular aid to devotion and a household book.

Whatever the spiritual value or significance of his message, it was delivered to the world in a time of comparative peace. There had been tumult and revolution in the Church before his day, and there were to be tumults and revolutions both in Church and State after his death; but throughout his shortened span of life, the Gunpowder Plot failing ignominiously, no great explosion shook the social framework of England. The Spanish Armada had given its futile assault before his birth; the attempted revolution of Essex was quelled in his childhood; and if Englishmen took part in foreign wars it was without contributing a Blenheim or a Waterloo to the drum and trumpet story of the nations. It is needless to say, however, that if there was tranquillity without, within there were forces at work of serious import to the English race. The problem of English kingship, and its legal powers and limitations, was yet to be solved, and with it the momentous question of the form and guise of English Christianity. Were the English people,

already expanding into newly discovered lands, to part definitely and forever with their heritage of ordered and beautified worship, or to adapt its formularies to the growing needs of their own and later times? Queen Elizabeth for the moment had willed the latter course; but the strong Calvinism of the earlier revolution in the Church still swayed the minds of many within its fold, demanding even greater changes in its rites and ceremonies, if not their total abolition. And both parties to the controversy, being Englishmen and taking their religion like their pleasures sadly, were preparing to put the question to the argument of force, the most simple if not the most congenial to reformers of their day.

Inevitably the Poet of the Church was allied to the party of conservatism and reaction against the drastic ideals of the extreme Puritans—to the party called in its own time "Arminian" or Papistical, of which Laud was the dominating spirit and Andrewes the erudite and persuasive advocate; as Hooker had been the judicious apologist and Jeremy Taylor was yet to be the golden-mouthed orator. It was of this well-ruled and dignified Church that Herbert wrote:—

> I joy, dear Mother, when I view
> Thy perfect lineaments and hue,
> Both sweet and bright;

adding his frank but impolite criticism of the over-adornment of Rome and the dishevelled habits of Puritan worship. Happily, however, his office as the "sweet singer" of the movement was destined to be marred by none of the arbitrary acts which too often impaired and sometimes frustrated the work of its more prominent leaders. But his services to the renascent Church were not of a prominent or obvious kind. His self-sacrificing life as a village priest, the report of which shed a halo about his name, did not extend to three years, and those his last; his English verses, the only ones that could have affected the movement, were published posthumously; and his *Country Parson* did not appear until long after his death. By his friends and admirers his place in the world of religious thought and experience was recognised; but as a permanent influence in and upon their struggling Church they would doubtless have set him far below the more striking figures then in its horizon. In doing so they would perhaps have been right, for the place of a poet is still a dubious one in the religious as in the secular world.

Other aspects of the time may be recalled. Herbert's short life of less than forty years (1593-1632) reached from the latter days of Queen Elizabeth to the eighth reigning year of the first Charles, and may be said to span the gulf separating the old

English world from ours. The splendours of Elizabeth's and Shakespeare's time make a fascinating picture for our imaginations; but we are not of it—a thin but palpable veil shuts off our sober life from its brighter as well as darker side. The seventeenth century made us Puritans; and Puritans we have remained ever since, though many late signs point to an opposite conclusion. The reign of James the First, and the opening reign of his son, had, however, many of the social and material marks of their more spacious predecessor. They were still characterised by wealth, colour and show—the artistic instincts of the Middle Ages were not yet dead, and people when they could lived and moved in an atmosphere of chromatic effects, to the sound of tabor and pipe, and with gay pageants by land and water. Their architectural environment was still picturesque, as were also their costumes and personal adornments, in spite of occasional extravagance. The common notion, however, that the two great political and religious parties of the age were strongly contrasted in the matter of dress, should be modified. The close-cropped Roundhead, with his prominent ears and unfashionable clothing, and the fantastic fop among the Cavaliers —the "antic" of contemporary caricature, with his love-locks, ribbons and rosettes—were no doubt

to be seen, but they were the extremes. The rational part of the community on both sides cut their hair and their garments by the rules of sense and moderation. Hampden's locks were no shorter than Strafford's; and Milton's and Bunyan's were as flowing and neatly kept as Herbert's own: while the two "sonnes of Zion," the "godly dissenting brother" and the "godly brother of the Presbyterian way," shown in a contemporary print, would have been called dandies by the generation before ours. The race was still marked by personal beauty, and famed for skill in music: Erasmus, a hundred years before, had found the English the most beautiful as well as the most musical of peoples, and they continued to be praised for both qualities.

It was an age of much family love, and of tenderness for infancy and childhood—there are no sweeter cradle-songs than those of the period. Warm friendships also existed among men: if enmities were strong and lasting, personal regard and admiration were equally so. This is especially true of the group with which Herbert was associated, the group including the saintly Bishop Andrewes; Dr. Donne, the "metaphysical" poet and popular preacher; Sir Henry Wotton, the accomplished courtier and diplomatist; Nicholas Ferrar, the scholar-merchant who gave up the

attractions of public life for one of religious seclusion; and last but not least, Izaak Walton. No life of George Herbert can be written without constant reference to his first and most exquisite biographer. Tradesman, Churchman and fisherman, pastoral poet and painter of Nature in her gentlest and fairest scenes, he used the subjects of his delightful *Lives* as he used the less fortunate living bait for his hooks, as if indeed he loved them. With his comely face and figure, a fishing-rod under his arm, and a volume of his beloved Gesner or the "divine" Du Bartas in his hand, he must ever accompany those who attempt to write, as well as those who read, the Life he pictured with so much sympathy and power.

Students of the inner trends of the time cannot fail to detect symptoms of revolt against some of its outward influences. The Reformation, if it did nothing else, made men think for themselves, and think as it were with the English Bible open before them. From the days of its public reading at St. Paul's by "one John Porter," the "fresh young man of a big stature" who "could read well and had an audible voice," the translated Scriptures had been in the hands or in the minds of all, and religious experience had centred in and about the sacred text. But if the responsibility of working out one's salvation by an independent

IZAAK WALTON

FROM THE PAINTING BY JACOB HUYSMAN, IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

study of Christian documents had its benefits, it also tended to lawlessness, and not seldom with the more sensitive to gloom and distress. The severe and often irresponsible preacher, layman as well as cleric, was abroad in the land; and amid the noise of clashing creeds and doctrines the desire for order, peace and opportunity for quiet growth—in a word, for religious culture—was felt by many. The affection in which a large part of the community had come to hold the *Book of Common Prayer*, "our good old Service Book," as Walton calls it, and the "devised" worship of the Church—both afterwards by the Puritans—is an evidence of this feeling. But with many the desire went further. There was something like a revival of the old longing for a retired and contemplative life which, a few generations before, had driven men and women to the cloister. Walton and his beneficed friends appear to have engaged in the apostolic sport of fishing partly in response to this impulse: no one can read his *Compleat Angler* without being struck with its strong current of devout contemplation. With men like Burton, the anatomist of mirth not less than of melancholy, a desire for the old cloisteral system was openly expressed. At the great Dissolution, he says, "some monasteries and collegiate cells might have

been well spared . . . for men and women to sequester themselves from the cares and tumults of the world . . . to follow their studies . . . and freely and truly to serve God." In the case of Nicholas Ferrar this ideal was practically realised in his community or rather family at Little Gidding, where a round of religious services was carried on day and night, and studies went hand in hand with useful work, a circle of

> Silence and sacred rest: peace and pure joys.

The influence of George Herbert on his own age owed at least some of its force to this strain of contemporary quietism: other minds as well were turning to the definitely ordered religious life. With him, unlike his friend Ferrar, the active duties of a parish priest were joined to those of the study, the ruled household, and the daily offices of the Church. Ferrar's ideal might be called the monastic, Herbert's the parochial. At Little Gidding the private community, the religious house and its members, formed the centre of thought and interest, though the community without its walls was not neglected. At Bemerton, if the Church was the centre, the parish was the equal if not the chief care. The one gave to the world the pattern of "reverent discipline and religious fear," with "soft obedience" and quiet

labour; the other, the pattern of the true spiritual shepherd in the midst of his flock, preaching, teaching, and exhorting to righteousness. The one faintly foreshadowed the Anglican brotherhoods and sisterhoods of our time: the other gave the English Church an ideal of personal consecration which, if perhaps seldom fully realised, has been and is still the mark and aim of many of her sons.

CHAPTER II

BIRTHPLACE, FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

"GEORGE HERBERT was born the third day of April, in the year of our Redemption, 1593. The place of his birth was near to the town of Montgomery, and in that castle that did then bear the name of that town and county. That castle was then a place of state and strength, and had been successively happy in the family of the Herberts, who had long possessed it: and with it a plentiful estate, and hearts as liberal to their poor neighbours: a family that had been blessed with men of remarkable wisdom, and a willingness to serve their country, and, indeed, to do good to all mankind: for which they were eminent. But, alas! this family did in the late rebellion suffer extremely in their estates: and the heirs of that castle saw it laid level with that earth that was too good to bury those wretches that were the cause of it."

Thus Walton begins what may well have been the most congenial of his biographical tasks,

RUINS OF MONTGOMERY CASTLE

although personally unacquainted with its subject: "I have but seen him," he says further on. Born in the same year, and only a few months later (9th August, 1593), he had already survived him by thirty-seven years, and had published three of the five *Lives* by which his piscatorial fame has been enlarged but not eclipsed: those of Donne, Hooker and Wotton. *The Compleat Angler* had appeared in 1653. His hand, therefore, was well seasoned to literary toils; and that it had not lost but had rather gained in cunning is abundantly proved by the felicity of his performance. In several respects he was an ideal biographer. He loved and admired loyally; but his hero-worship was tempered by a wholesome resolution to tell the truth, and by a shrewdness of judgment that prevented him from raising his subjects into demi-gods. He was painstaking in gathering his facts, not over-credulous for his time, and determined that, like his fishing treatise, his *Lives* should not "read dull and tediously." The result was the series of portraits that Wordsworth compared to the colours of a lovely sky. Walton, in fact, was an incorrigible artist; he posed and draped his figures as seemed good to him, and painted them with a skill that Lely or Van Dyck might have envied. His apologies for his "artless" pen may be ignored. He was, in reality, the soul of inno-

cent artifice, and could, whenever engaged on a favourite theme — as in many passages in the *Angler* and elsewhere — marshal his words in mellow and seductive sequences unrivalled in the language for their beauty and charm.

The landscape setting of Herbert's childhood was in a high degree romantic. "Nature," affirms the garrulous Fuller of Montgomeryshire, "cannot be accused for being a step-mother unto this county; for although she hath mounted many a high hill (which may probably be presumed not over fruitful), yet hath she also sunk many a delightful valley therein . . . which plentifully yield all necessaries for man's comfortable subsistence." The poet's birthplace, the town of Montgomery, lies in one of these agreeable vales, that of the Severn, not far from the Shropshire border. It is noted for its fine situation, on the slope of a hill on the river's eastern bank; for its cruciform church, containing a memorial of the Herbert family; and for sundry ancient remains, including the dismantled fortress. This consists of a few shattered walls above the town, the position commanding a wide prospect of English as well as Welsh scenery. To the pilgrim in search of Herbert relics, however, the site of the ancient mansion known as Black Hall will, with the church, probably afford the most interest; for

The LIFE

OF

Mr. *GEORGE HERBERT.*

Wiſdom of Salom. 4. 10.

He pleaſed God, and was beloved of him: ſo that whereas he lived among ſinners, he tranſlated him.

LONDON,

Printed by *Tho: Newcomb*, for *Richard Marriott*,

ſold by moſt Bookſellers. M, DC. LXX.

THE ORIGINAL EDITION (BY WALTON)

there and not in the castle itself the poet is now believed to have seen the light.[1] The house, long since destroyed by fire, stood at the lower end of the town, within the old walls, where a deep fosse may still be seen. The memorial in the church consists of the handsome monument of Richard Herbert, father of the first and most famous Lord Herbert of Cherbury and of the poet; the effigy being represented in complete armour, with a recumbent figure of his wife by his side.

Here the future poet of the Church, with his brothers and sisters, spent most of his earlier years. Whether the wilderness of mountains about them attracted or repelled his mind we do not know. Possibly they inspired more fear than liking; for old associations are not broken in a day, and memories of traditional border feuds doubtless lingered on and tinged the landscape. Mountain fastnesses and brigandage have an

[1] "His father was Richard Herbert of Blache-hall, in Montgomery, Esq.," says Barnabas Oley in his first Preface to *The Country Parson;* and Lord Herbert of Cherbury in his *Autobiography* describes the mansion as the family home. "It was an ordinary saying in the country at that time," he declares, in reference to the family hospitality, "when they saw any fowl rise: 'Fly where thou wilt, thou wilt light at Black-hall,' which was a low building, but of great capacity, my grandfather erected in his age; his father and himself in former times having lived in Montgomery Castle."

ancient alliance; and it is quite possible that the young scholar may have preferred the "sweet security" of the streets of London or Oxford to the companionship of his native hills.

The family had shown character and ability for many generations, and, as Walton said, "a willingness to serve their country." At Court, in camps and at tourneys they were ever lucky—

> The Herberts, every cockpit day,
> Doe carry away
> The gold and glory of the day,

runs an old rhyme, applied to another branch of the house. Montgomery Castle is officially recorded as having been granted to the Herberts of Cherbury by the Crown in the fifteenth century; but an old Welsh ballad recites that the fortress and its broad lands came to them through marriage with "a miller's daughter," who thus lamented her elevation to a higher sphere of life:—

> O God, woe is me miserable,
> My father was a miller,
> And my mother a milleress,
> And now I am a ladie!

Whether the house had its beginnings with Charlemagne, and Hildegardis, daughter of Childebrand, Duke of Suabia, does not seem necessary to prove. Most families have their royal or ducal

origins, and Walton's plain genealogical tree needs no grafts :—

"The father of our George," he says, "was Richard Herbert, the son of Edward Herbert, Knight, the son of Richard Herbert, Knight, the son of the famous Sir Richard Herbert of Colebrook, in the County of Monmouth, Banneret, who was the youngest brother of that memorable William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, that lived in the reign of our King Edward IV." His eldest son, the future Lord Herbert of Cherbury, describes him as "black-haired and bearded . . . of a manly or somewhat stern look, but withal very handsome and well-compact in his limbs and of great courage." The name of Vaughan occurs in his pedigree, though his son's relationship to the author of *Silex Scintilians* may have been remote.

Of at least equal importance to the formation of the poet's character was his beautiful and romantically named mother, Magdalen Newport, "the youngest daughter," Walton continues, "of Sir Richard, and sister to Sir Francis Newport of High-Arkall, in the County of Salop, Knight;" her father, Sir Richard Newport, being, it is said, the largest landowner of his time in Shropshire, and a descendant of the old reigning princes of Powysland. Mrs. Herbert was "the happy mother of seven sons and three daughters, which she would

often say was Job's number and Job's distribution; and as often bless God that they were neither defective in their shapes nor in their reason, and very often reprove them that they did not praise God for so great a blessing." After a promise of later consideration of her "person, wisdom, and virtue," Walton gives a short account of the poet's brothers and sisters, which is of interest as showing that all or most of his brothers inherited the family aptitude for public life. Incidentally it affords a comparison with that given of his brothers by Lord Herbert himself. Edward Herbert fully confirms Walton's praise of their "fortunate and true English valour;" but he adds the fact, omitted by Walton—perhaps from ignorance—that four of them were inveterate duellists!

"My brother Richard," he says, "after he had been brought up in learning, went to the Low Countries, where he continued many years with much reputation, both in the wars and for fighting single duels, which were many, insomuch that between both, he carried, as I have been told, the scars of four-and-twenty wounds upon him to his grave. . . . My brother William being brought up likewise in learning, went afterwards to the wars in Denmark, where, fighting a single combat, and having his sword broken, he not only defended himself with that piece which remained,

THE HERBERT MONUMENT, MONTGOMERY CHURCH

but, closing with his adversary, threw him down, and so held him until company came in. . . . Henry, after he had been brought up in learning as the other brothers were . . . also hath given several proofs of his courage in duels and otherwise;" while his youngest brother, Thomas, the sailor, "fought divers times with great courage and success with divers men in single fight." Of the seven brothers, all of them "brought up in learning," George the poet, and his next elder brother, Charles, who died young as a Fellow of New College, Oxford, are the only two not mentioned by him as proficient in duelling.

His brothers' exploits, however, pale ineffectually beside those which Edward Herbert has recorded of himself. By his own account, in his *Autobiography* (not published until the eighteenth century, and hence not available for Walton), his character combined the finer qualities of the Chevalier Bayard and Don Quixote with those of an arrant but entertaining coxcomb. His valour, he would have us believe, was not equalled among his contemporaries. In the midst of his diplomatic labours he was always ready for a personal combat, and he distributed his challenges like invitations to dinner. His reputation as a duellist drove most of his adversaries from the field before the actual test of battle; and at the

siege of Juliers he spent a whole night in search through the camp for some one willing to cross swords with him. But he explains this apparent bloodthirstiness by regard for his oath of knighthood, and adds: "I never had a quarrel with man for mine own sake: so that, although in mine own nature I was ever choleric and hasty, yet I never, without occasion given, quarrelled with anybody." His vanity also is transparent. At Court, Queen Elizabeth looked upon him "attentively:" and at his knighting by King James, "I could tell," he says, "how much my person was commended by the lords and ladies that came to see the solemnity then used, but I shall flatter myself too much if I believed it." Nevertheless, he was an efficient servant of the State, as ambassador to France and in other capacities; and as a bold and independent thinker his position has long been recognised.

Although some uncertainty seems to exist as to the date of her birth, Mrs. Herbert could not have been much over thirty, if so old, when left a widow — in 1596, or, as otherwise recorded, in 1597. The following is Lord Herbert's list of her sons: Edward (himself), Richard, William, Charles, George, Henry and Thomas, the last being "a posthumous." Her daughters were: "Elizabeth, Margaret, Frances," but their places

in the scale of age he does not give. Walton's reference to them is brief: "Of the three sisters I need say no more than that they were all married to persons of worth and plentiful fortunes, and lived to be examples of virtue, and to do good in their generation." Their brother tells us the names of their husbands, with a few other details. Elizabeth, the eldest, married Sir Henry Jones of Albermarles; Margaret married John Vaughan, son and heir to Owen Vaughan of Llwydiart; and Frances, the youngest, married Sir John Brown, knight, of Lincolnshire, her eldest son in turn maintaining the family reputation as a duellist.

This was the little brood committed to Mrs. Herbert's charge, to be brought up "in learning" and other essentials of good citizenship. Their ages ranged downwards from thirteen or fourteen years to infancy. Probably they showed early the characteristics of their race, and may have been difficult to manage; but Mrs. Herbert was clearly equal to the task. Under her firm but affectionate rule, however, their lot could not have been otherwise than happy. "George Herbert spent much of his childhood in a sweet content under the eye and care of his prudent mother, and the tuition of a chaplain or tutor to him and two of his brothers in her own family." Their

home was chiefly at Montgomery, and it was here first, no doubt, that "the beauties of his pretty behaviour and wit shined and became so eminent and lovely . . . that he seemed marked out for piety, and to become the care of Heaven, and of a particular good angel to guard and guide him." The future Lord Herbert had spent the first nine years of his life in the home of his grandmother, Lady Newport; but his mother, wishing to give him "such advantages of learning, and other education, as might suit his birth and fortune, and thereby make him the more fit for the service of his country, did, at his being of a fit age, remove from Montgomery Castle with him, and some of her younger sons, to Oxford; and having entered Edward into Queen's College,[1] and provided him a fit tutor, she commended him to his care; yet she continued there with him, and still kept him in a moderate awe of herself, and so much under her own eye as to see and converse with him daily; but she managed this power over him without any such rigid sourness as might make her company a torment to her child; but with such a sweetness and compliance with the recreations and pleasures of youth as did incline him willingly to spend much of his time in the com-

[1] Edward Herbert was entered at University College, not Queen's.

pany of his dear and careful mother ; which was to her great content ; for she would often say, 'That as our bodies take a nourishment suitable to the meat on which we feed, so our souls do as insensibly take in vice by the example or conversation with wicked company ;' and would therefore say, 'That ignorance of vice was the best preservation of virtue ; and that the very knowledge of wickedness was as tinder to inflame and kindle sin, and to keep it burning.'" From what we know by his own admissions of the natural liveliness of Master Edward Herbert, it is more than probable that this maternal supervision and "moderate awe" were necessary. And even in the case of his brother George, who is thought to have joined his mother in her Oxford sojourn, some such gentle oversight may well have been needful, in spite of his angelic guardianship and infant pieties.

According to Walton, it was while Mrs. Herbert was thus residing at Oxford for her son's benefit that "her great and harmless wit, her cheerful gravity, and her obliging behaviour, gained her an acquaintance and friendship with most of any eminent worth or learning that were at that time in or near the University ; and particularly of Mr. John Donne, who then came accidentally to that place." This was the brilliant if perplex-

ing personality who, after many vicissitudes, moral, intellectual and otherwise, became Dean of St. Paul's, and the most admired preacher of his day in the metropolis. But although the "amity made up of a chain of suitable inclinations and virtues," which was to bind them together until the dean preached her funeral sermon in 1627, may have begun here, he could not without an impossible breach of manners have then addressed to the young and charming widow his well-known poem "The Autumnal Beauty," Walton's assertion notwithstanding.

Lord Herbert's *Autobiography* is of special interest for the light it throws on his own education and indirectly on that of the poet. The picture he gives of his own boyhood and youth is distinctly entertaining; and his insistence on the truthfulness of the future author of *De Veritate* is characteristic: "I remember in that time I was corrected sometimes for going to cuffs with two schoolfellows, being both older than myself, but never for telling a lie." He admits his hot temper, and "being subject to choler and passion more than I ought." At nine he began to learn Welsh, and between ten and twelve he acquired a knowledge of logic and Greek. On his going to Oxford, at twelve or thirteen, he remembered disputing in logic and performing the required

LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE AT CHARLCOTT

exercises oftener in Greek than in Latin. Like all the Herberts, he had a natural gift of languages. At Oxford or at home, without master or teacher, he attained the knowledge of French, Italian and Spanish, "by the help of some books in Latin or English, translated into those idioms, and the dictionaries of those several languages." He studied music with no less success; his brother George, though doubtless at a much later date, following his example. His object in learning languages was to make himself "a citizen of the world;" and he acquired music for the worthy end "that I might entertain myself at home, and together refresh my mind after my studies . . . and that I might not need the company of young men, in whom I observed in those times much ill example and debauchery."

His reflections on the "education of a gentleman" in his time are instructive. Latin and Greek should be the basis of mental culture, and Greek should have the precedence. The lad's "governor for manners" should accompany him to the University, by reason of the notorious frailty of youth. He did not approve "for elder brothers" the common University course of four or five years, as if they "meant to proceed Masters of Arts and Doctors in some science." Too much of the subtleties of logic he contemned:

it was good for little more than to make them "excellent wranglers;" "which art," he adds, "though it may be tolerable in a mercenary lawyer, I can by no means commend in a sober and well-governed gentleman." Yet he should know the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy: geography, terrestrial and celestial, were of use; judicial astrology not so necessary. He approved of arithmetic, "for keeping accounts": geometry he considered "not much useful for a gentleman;" but for medicine he had the highest regard. "This art will get him not only much knowledge, but much credit," from the cures he will be able to effect. Especially he conceived it "a fine study, and worthy a gentleman" to be "a good botanic, so that he may know the nature of all herbs and plants." Anatomy he believed to be a good preventive of atheism. Rhetoric and oratory he considered desirable studies for those who wished to express themselves "with eloquence and grace." He advised the would-be orator to "speak common things ingeniously and wittily . . . common and dull language relishing more of the clown than the gentleman." But bodily exercises have his chief praise. Those which he had mostly used, and desired to recommend to his posterity, were "riding the great horse and fencing." Dancing he also advised. Swimming was

good for those who were not "given to cramps and convulsions;" he had not, however, acquired it himself, owing to the prohibition of his over-cautious mother. But fencing and riding, especially the art of "fighting a duel on horseback," were the best accomplishments of a gallant man. Carding and dicing he abhorred.

There is no reason to suppose that George Herbert did not, in his early years, have the same training as his eldest brother, or at least that of a younger son in a great house. Later, no doubt, as with Charles, the other son destined for a scholar's life, there were differences. Whoever the "chaplain or tutor to him" may have been, he was sure to be put under the classical millstone at the earliest age possible. That he was proficient in languages we know, and he doubtless lisped in their grammars. Music he probably learned in childhood; the lute, viol, "small organ," and other musical instruments, were common in the better country-houses of the day, and singing was almost universal. Whether he was instructed in "riding the great horse," dancing, swimming, and the like, we do not know; but, as Walton expressly tells us, he wore a sword in his courtier days, and it may be presumed he had been taught its use. We are not, however, informed of his ever "going to cuffs" with his

schoolfellows; and altogether there is no reason why his character in the innocent age of his "pretty behaviour" may not have been what his first biographer has drawn. The intelligent boy, of studious habits and religious instincts, is found in every generation; though seldom without the defects of his qualities,—pride it may be, or some other earthly alloy. George, his eldest brother admits, "was not exempt from passion and choler, being infirmities to which all our [Herbert] race is subject;" but otherwise he was "without reproach in his actions." Unfortunately, we have no early portraits of him, as we have of Milton; yet no great stretch of imagination is required to picture his slender frame in short coats, a diminutive ruff or falling collar about his neck, his hair cropped to a Puritan shortness, and his long, grave, little face full of sensitiveness and feeling—full, too, of possibilities for future suffering and power.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

WITH the beginning of his public school career the life of George Herbert takes a more definite and easily followed course. He had remained with his mother and the family chaplain until he was "about the age of twelve years; and being at that time well instructed in the rules of grammar, he was not long after commended to the care of Dr. Neale, who was then Dean of Westminster; and by him to the care of Mr. Ireland, who was then chief master in that school." There he continued until he had attained proficiency in the learned languages, "especially in the Greek and Latin tongue, in which he after proved an excellent critic." The date of his admission is usually put down as 1604 or 1605. If he entered at the former date he may have been consigned to the care of Lancelot Andrewes, who was dean at the time, and have spent his compulsory year as a town boy, prior to his election to a King's scholarship, as a boarder in the deanery.

In that event the friendship between him and the future bishop may have begun when the dean was fifty and Herbert not more than twelve years old. If, on the other hand, he entered in 1605, Dr. Neale (or Neile) would have been dean as Walton says ; but in either case he would have been placed under the immediate care of Richard Ireland, the head-master from 1599 to 1610. These things, however, are hardly of great moment. It is enough to know that he entered Westminster School[1] early in the reign of James I., the erudite monarch and theologian who was destined to become his patron, and left it after a few years for a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge—a marvel of classical learning even for that age.

To the boy of twelve the school must have been full of interests. The head-master, and the not less laborious second master, with the aid of monitors and what assistance the dean and the prebendaries were able or willing to give them, ruled over not less than a hundred and twenty pupils, probably over a good many more. These included the King's scholars, the pensioners, peregrines and oppidans, and the choristers, who sang in the

[1] The poets Ben Jonson, Randolph and Cowley, and, at a later date, the sensitive Cooper, were of the school. William Camden, the antiquary, was head-master from 1593 to 1599, and the immortal Richard Busby from 1638 to 1695.

Abbey services and attended lessons for two hours every week-day in the school. The pensioners, some of whom may have been of superior social position, boarded with the dean, the prebendaries and the masters ; the peregrines were country boys, who boarded with relatives or friends, and the oppidans were the sons of residents in or near Westminster. The King's or Queen's scholars—the scholars *par excellence*—were chosen from the town boys of at least a year's standing in the school. Regard was had to the candidate's "intellect, learning, character, and want of means ;" and the election was unique at the time in being determined, partly, at least, by a competitive examination. Rich men's sons were not excluded, nor were poor boys unduly favoured ; but if interest was used for George Herbert his brilliant scholarship alone would doubtless have gained him the election. It should be explained that this election of a town boy to a King's scholarship in his own school, for which the aspirant was called a "minor candidate," was quite different from his later election (if so fortunate) to a studentship at Christ Church, Oxford, or a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, for both of which he was then as now styled a "major candidate." These major elections, when the successful candidates, who were then chosen only from the King's scholars, were "sped away"

to one or the other of the Universities, were held in Rogation Week, and formed a natural occasion for dinners, declamations and epigrams.

At that time, as to-day, the buildings devoted to the school stood on the south side of the ancient Abbey Church, and were, comparatively speaking, in the country. "The Abbot's public refectory became the dining hall of the College, while the granary was used as the dormitory and living room of the Queen's [and later of the King's] scholars." The ancient buttery became the head-master's house; and by Herbert's time the old dormitory of the monks, with another apartment near it, had become the library and school-room. If all were of monastic origin, they were surely put to no ignoble use. The solemn beauty of the over-shadowing Abbey Church, in which on Sundays the whole college attended morning and evening prayer and the Communion, could hardly fail, though perhaps insensibly, to affect the minds of the youthful pupils; and if some were repelled, George Herbert's, we may think, was not of the number.

The daily life and studies of the school were generally those of similar establishments of the time, though the special prominence given to Greek may have been one cause of the poet's becoming "an excellent critic" in that tongue.

THE CLOISTERS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY HAMBLE AFTER A DRAWING BY THOMPSON

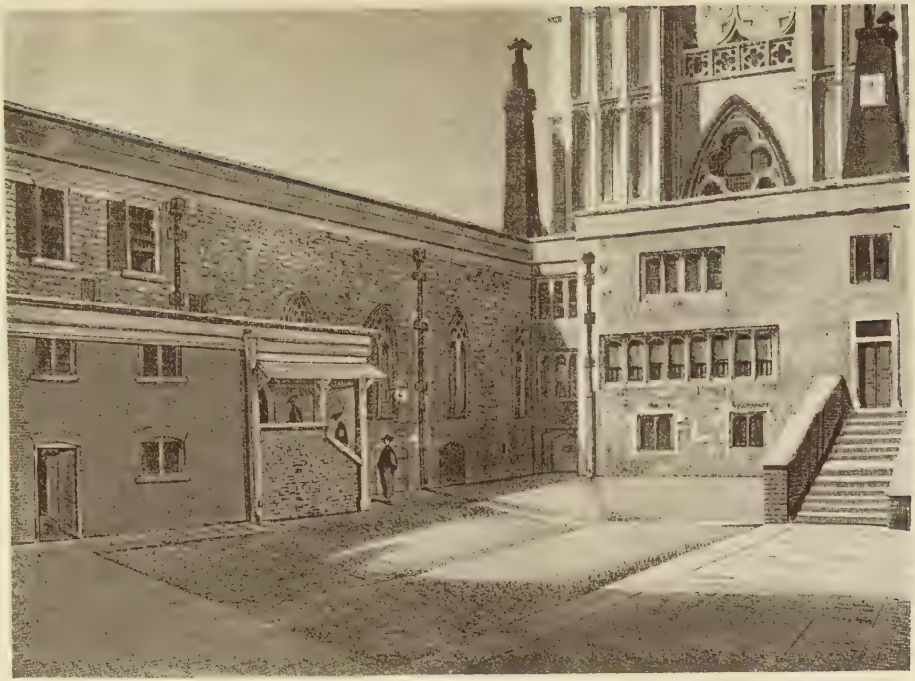
To us, however, the existence both of masters and pupils, with the monotony of its routine and the few holidays they enjoyed, may seem little less than a form of servitude. They faced its hardships, nevertheless, at a courageously early hour. At five o'clock the forty King's scholars in the granary bedroom were aroused from their slumbers by the resounding cry of *Surgite!* from the dormitory monitors, and at once began their devotions. First, kneeling, the collect for grace—of which they stood in present need—was repeated. Then came :—

"*In Nomine Patris* and *Pœnitentiam agite*, the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the suffrages, followed by the hymn *Jam Lucis orto sidere* and Psalms vii., xix. and xxiv. After a first lesson from the Proverbs, the *Te Deum* was said, and after a second lesson from the Sermon on the Mount, the *Benedictus*. Then came the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer again, with the suffrages, two collects and the prayer for the Queen [or the King]. The service was concluded with the collect for peace."[1]

This seems a tolerably long exercise for unbreakfasted boys, especially in the darkness or candle-light of a cold winter morning. Next, after making their beds and sweeping under them,

[1] *Annals of Westminster School*, Sargeaunt.

they went in pairs to the cloisters to wash. Their ablutions were of the scantiest, involving only their hands, though possibly their faces also. If the pump were frozen, we may suppose the ceremony omitted until a more genial season. At six o'clock all the pupils, town boys as well as King's scholars, met the second master in the school, and engaged in further devotions. Then work began, a scrutiny of hands, faces, and possibly of heads, proceeding the while. The head-master came at seven, still it will be observed before daylight in the winter solstice. Something resembling breakfast—bread and possibly small beer—may have been partaken of, though when and where is not certain. "At eight o'clock the head-master set a proposition or passage in Latin to be translated by the fourth, varied or controverted by the fifth, and versified by the sixth and seventh forms." As the day began, so it continued. Dinner in the great hall—the old abbot's refectory, warmed, one is glad to know, by an open fire under a louvre or chimney in the roof—was probably at ten or eleven. Here, after more prayers and thanksgivings for royal and other benefactors, the King's scholars and the pensioners assembled, and, "standing in two rows down either side, said grace before dinner." The dean and other dignitaries of the Abbey were present, at least on



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL: THE COLLEGE HALL

FROM A DRAWING BY J. T. SMITH, 1808

certain days, sitting about the high table at the end of the hall. During the meal, the Scriptures or some Latin manuscript was read by one of the boys; and the dignitaries of the high table sometimes sent down "good remembrances" of food from their own better fare, with themes for extemporary epigrams. Another long grace concluded the repast.

The afternoon brought some respite, but apparently not much; and work went on until the six o'clock supper, like the dinner a well-graced, if perhaps not a well-provided meal. Mercifully, an hour's break in the interval appears to have been allowed; and twice a week an hour was devoted to music with the choirmaster.[1] At seven studies were resumed, and after more prayers the King's scholars and the pensioners adjourned to the hall for a supper "of small beer only." At eight, after evening prayers in the dormitory, and a collect privately repeated, the King's scholars went to bed.

This was the routine for four days in the week: Friday and Saturday introduced a slight change. On Sundays, as already mentioned, the school attended morning and evening prayer and Communion in the Abbey, where the prebendaries preached in turn, as they did also on saints' days,

[1] Games appear to have been hardly known at this time.

the boys making notes of their sermons. Otherwise, happily, the saints' days were "play" days or holidays. A half-holiday appears to have been allowed once a week, not, however, in addition to the saints' days. To us, the greatest hardship of the life must seem the absence of any genuine breaking-up times, and periods of escape from the tyranny of routine. Holidays, however, were at that time of the briefest, and many of the boys remained in the school, owing in some cases to the long distance from their homes and the difficulties of travel.

That it was literally a grammar school need not be said : its end and aim, like that of similar schools of the time, was to teach the budding boy how to handle "his noun" and "his verb" in one or both of the learned languages. And, like the others, it did so largely by physical means. "From the beginning the school was under the shadow of the rod," and an abraded skin was considered the best intellectual stimulant. Happily, the reign of Nicholas Udal, "the greatest beater" of his time, was an old memory when Herbert entered ; but although Ireland may have been milder, he doubtless did not wholly dispense with the birch. The famous annual play, presented every Christmas—by the school in Latin and by the choir boys in English—had long been an important

MARBLES IN CLOISTERS

SHOWING THE DRESS PROBABLY WORN BY HERBERT WHEN AT THE SCHOOL

From an engraving by R. Pollard after the picture by R. M. Page

feature in the school life: Queen Elizabeth, it is said, attended the play of 1563, and she contributed to the expenses of the plays, both at Westminster and at St. Paul's.

The close association of Herbert's life with the great London Church, sometimes called the English Valhalla, may again be pointed out. Even his best admirers, who have paid their tribute at the Bemerton shrine, forget in their visits to Westminster Abbey how intimate this connection was. Possibly if his cenotaph in the baptistery, the "Deputy Poets' Corner," with that of his modern successor, Keble, had been placed in the familiar south transept, it might be otherwise. Yet the child-scholar, in his four-square cap and long gown —black like the ampler vestments of his pedagogues—must have joined in many a slow procession threading the minster aisles; and if he did not "love the high-embowed roof," the singing of the young choristers might well have brought "all Heaven" before his eyes. "Sweetest of sweets" he calls Church music in his own poem so named; and his affection for the "full-voiced quire" might easily have dated from his school-days. Their machine-like regularity, with the Latin morning hymn and the later mingling of studies with recurrent prayers and other religious offices, was clearly not distasteful to him, and may have laid

the foundation of that love of order, discipline and rule shown in his writings as in his life.

If the Abbey fostered his liking for a dignified ritual, his first years at Cambridge could hardly have done so, as all records of the time point to a good deal of laxity if not disorder in the services of the college chapels and of the University church. But if the master of his own foundation, Trinity, though a staunch upholder of the English Church, sympathised with the Calvinism then dominant at both Universities, he was none the less his friend and admirer. "It may be noted," says Walton, "that from his first entrance into the College the generous Dr. Nevil was a cherisher of his studies, and such a lover of his person, his behaviour, and the excellent endowments of his mind, that he took him often into his own company, by which he confirmed his native gentleness; and if during this time he expressed any error it was that he kept himself too much retired, and at too great a distance with his inferiors; and his clothes seemed to prove that he put too great a value on his parts and parentage."

George Herbert was elected to a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, probably in the week after Rogation Sunday, 1608. He took his B.A. degree in 1613 (modern time), his M.A. degree in 1616, and was elected a minor fellow in 1614, a

major fellow in 1616, and "*sublector quartæ classis*" the year following. In 1618 he was *prelector* in the rhetoric school. He became public orator of the University in 1619, and held the office for eight years, retiring in 1627. His fellowship was vacated, probably because of his marriage, in 1628, or about five years before his death. It will thus be seen that nearly his whole life was connected, at least officially, with the University which has long been proud to own him among its most distinguished sons.

At the date of his matriculation that ancient "incorporation in all and every of the liberal arts and sciences" had, except in one or two features, assumed its present form. Sprung, like its friendly rival at Oxford, out of a dim and misty past, its development had followed upon generally similar lines. From the traditional barn where, in 1110, Joffred, Abbot of Crowland, and his fellow-monks "made often profession of their sciences," to the latest of what has been called the mediæval colleges, its growth had been continuous. The early lodging-house system, with its extortion by the townspeople, had given place to private hostels governed by the teachers and students themselves; and these in turn had been supplanted by the colleges and halls, to which the old religious houses, Augustinian, Franciscan,

Dominican and Carmelite, had given up their sites and decayed buildings. By Herbert's time, indeed, all the colleges and halls, save the modern foundations of Downing and Selwyn, had been established. Foreign travellers had praised their stately and beautiful buildings without stint; kings and queens, nobles and ecclesiastics, had sought the honour of recording their names as their founders or benefactors; and the long succession from Peterhouse to Sidney Sussex was without a parallel, except at Oxford, in the scholastic world.

The University had felt the quickening breath of the new learning and the new religion; it had furnished a large proportion of the Marian martyrs, notably Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley; and it had long been the home of Protestantism, though also a firm supporter of royalty. The famous statutes of Queen Elizabeth, in 1570, had formulated stringent rules for the government of its members, the same stress being laid on the fashion of their dress and hair as on the arrangement of lectures and the standards of conduct; but many of these enactments were now more frequently honoured in the breach than in the observance. The current routine might be called that of the contemporary grammar school writ large; though with the important addition of the public exercises in the common centre of academic life known as the

THE GREAT GATE, TRINITY COLLEGE

FROM LE KEUX'S ENGRAVING

Schools. Here, in the building now chiefly occupied by the University Library, the students of all the colleges attended the lectures of the professors of Greek, logic, mathematics, philosophy and the like, or met to hear or take part in the public disputations of those students who were preparing for their degrees. At this time, however, there is good evidence that the public lectures, and the once famous word-combats, in which the young sophisters had crossed their wits over knotty points in theology, medicine, or metaphysics, were much neglected, or treated as a mere formality ; the practical instruction of the students having been largely taken over by the college tutors and lecturers. The extreme youthfulness of the undergraduates has often been commented on ; but as the Earl of Essex entered at eleven, Lord Bacon at thirteen, Herbert at fifteen and Milton at seventeen, the range was obviously considerable. Their comparative youth, however, explains the use of corporal punishment at both Universities ; for the schoolboys of the age certainly did not escape the rod by matriculation at Oxford or Cambridge. Until attaining the degree of B.A., they were still *non-adulti*, and liable to the birch for any infringement of discipline ; and other penalties, including fines, impositions, and even expulsion, were freely inflicted. The crimes most repugnant

to authority included drunkenness, "the taking of tobacco," brawling in public, and especially swimming or bathing in "any river, pool, or other water in the County of Cambridge." The keeping of "fierce birds" was also prohibited, and attendance at bull and bear baitings, boxing matches and dancings severely denounced. On the other hand, archery, tennis, football, and like "honest sports," were allowed under restrictions; and cards and dice might be indulged in at Christmas, but "openly and in moderation."

The tendency of the time was without doubt towards liberty if not licence, the "greate neglecte of disputacions" in the schools being only one of its symptoms. If contemporary critics, however, give unhopeful accounts of the average youth in *statu pupillari*, some of them throw valuable light on their pleasures and pursuits. The lighter-minded undergraduates of his time, says Henry Peacham[1] of Trinity, writing about 1620, had "no further thought of studie than to trim up their studies with pictures, and place the fairest books in openest view, which, poor lads, they scarce ever opened . . . and what together with the sweetnesse of libertie, variety of companie, and so many kinds of recreations in towne and fields abroad, they learned but little." The acting of plays in Latin

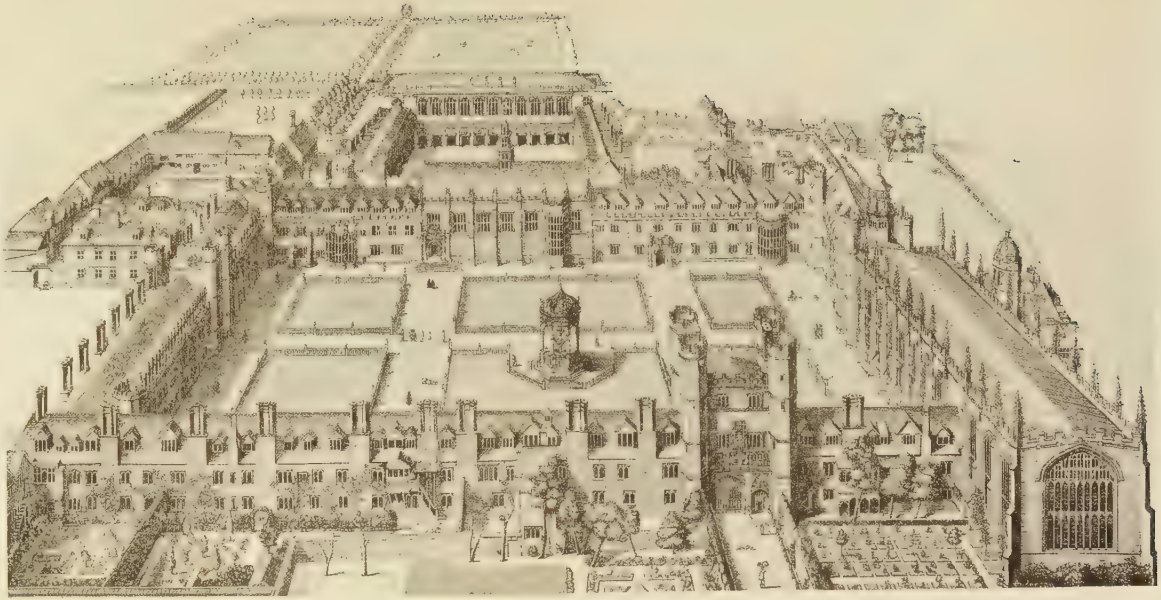
[1] Author of *The Country Gentleman*.

and English, in the college halls and elsewhere, had long been a popular form of entertainment—not inappropriately in a seat of learning which had given Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Greene, and many other distinguished dramatists, to the world. At the visits of royalty and other important persons, they invariably made part of the scheme of diversion ; and although Milton has recorded his contempt for both plays and actors, they seem, as a rule, to have delighted their auditory. Another favourite intellectual exercise was the manufacture of verses on every occasion of public mourning or joy, such as the death of the sovereign, and the crowning of his or her successor. The Town and Gown embroilments, which from time immemorial had afforded a more or less hazardous sport to both branches of the community, were also in high favour with the more active of undergraduate youth.

The leading studies of the day appear to have been rhetoric and logic, though considerable attention was bestowed on the classics. Modern mathematics and physical science awaited the master minds of Newton and his successors of our own time ; the rival philosophies of Bacon and Descartes had not yet broken the leaden rule of Aristotle, and the Cambridge Platonists were still to come. The curriculum of the University, how-

ever, was then as now a wide and perplexing theme; and it is perhaps enough to know that the great literatures of Greece and Rome were to a certain extent cultivated by its members, at least in the intervals between their theological discussions.

The great collegiate institution of which Herbert was a member demands a few words. Trinity College was founded by Henry VIII. on the 19th of December, 1546, by the appropriation of the sites and buildings of three older foundations—King's Hall, Michael House and Physwick Hostel—the corporate life of the first being continued without essential break. The "King's Majesty's New College," endowed with the revenues of its predecessors, and royal grants largely derived from the suppressed monasteries, quickly assumed the leading place it has ever since held. The original scheme was enlarged by fresh statutes in 1560, by which the society consisted of a Master, sixty Fellows, sixty-two scholars and thirteen sizars, besides chaplains, deans, bursars and other officers. It is interesting to note that Fellows who were of the degree of Master of Arts had unfurnished rooms, free commons, and an allowance for "livery," with a yearly stipend of £2 13s. 4d. These things doubtless fell to Herbert's share on obtaining his Fellowship; and from what we know of his tastes it is improbable that his rooms



TRINITY COLLEGE

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW, FROM LOGGAN'S PRINT, TAKEN ABOUT 1688

were less pleasantly decorated than those of the light-hearted fellow-commoners and pensioners bemoaned by Peacham.

At this time the members of the college probably exceeded four hundred, the largest number at any one college in the University, and its roll of notable men was already long. Archbishop Whitgift had held the mastership from 1567 to 1577; Coke, Bacon, and the Earl of Essex had been among its students; and the strenuous Puritan, Thomas Cartwright, though deprived of his Fellowship, had left a name of strength to his party. At Herbert's election the famous Dr. Nevile, from his princely liberality called the Magnificent, had been head of the college for fifteen years. Appointed to the office by Queen Elizabeth, who made him Dean of Canterbury as well, he had already transformed its material fabric, having completed the spacious First Court and advanced £3,000 "that a great Hall might be erected answerable to the beauty of the new buildings," while the central fountain was another part of his design. At this time, also, he probably began the admirable cloistered court which bears his name. His hospitality was unbounded. Chief Justice Coke was his friend and guest; and he could say with pride that the Lord Chancellor, the two Archbishops, and many of the most eminent

statesmen and ecclesiastics of the age, were members of the great foundation over which he ruled. Remaining unmarried through life, he was able to leave the college what Fuller calls "a batchelor's bounty;" and, in the words of one of his pupils, John Hackett,[1] afterwards Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, "he never had his like for a splendid, courteous, and bountiful gentleman."

[1] Herbert's fellow-scholar at Westminster and Trinity.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY LIFE AND WRITINGS AT CAMBRIDGE

MRS. HERBERT, who doubtless accompanied her son to the University, induced Dr. Nevile "to take him into his particular care, and provide him a tutor; which he did most gladly undertake; for he knew the excellency of his mother, and how to value such a friendship." There is no reason why Walton's account of his first years in this learned and brilliant society should not be accepted. That he "consecrated the first-fruits of his early age to virtue and a serious study of learning," seems fully borne out by what we know of his character and later achievements; in any case his change from the restrictions of school life to the larger liberty of the University did not abate his zeal. This had been foreseen by Ireland, the head-master of his school, who gave him and his fellow-scholar, the future Bishop Hackett, a timely caution. When they were "sped away" to the college he assured them

"that he expected to have credit from them two at the University, or would never hope for it afterwards by any while he lived; and added withal that he need give them no counsel to follow their books, but rather to study moderately and use exercise, their parts being so good that if they were careful not to impair their health with too much study, they would not fail to arrive to the top of learning in any art or profession." What heed the two ambitious Westminster boys paid to his kindly warning we do not know; but if they lightened their labours with archery, or with foot-ball and tennis in the little green of the college, they probably did not frequent the bear-baitings and cock-fights of the town. It is to be feared, however, that Herbert, to his later cost, neglected the good advice.

Their lives, no doubt, were mainly spent in the new buildings of the great court of the college, the spacious quadrangle formed by Nevile's genius, which we see and admire to-day. If rules were enforced, their hours were even earlier than at school; for they were supposed to rise at half-four instead of five, and to attend chapel at the latter hour. The daily exercises of the public schools, however perfunctory, may have been an agreeable change; and their mental and social horizon was doubtless wider and more attractive.

THE GREAT COURT, TRINITY COLLEGE

FROM LE KEUX'S ENGRAVING

The college, indeed, under the magnificent Nevile, was unquestionably a place of much state and show, with many opportunities for seeing the great personages of the world; and the quality of its public cheer may be gathered from the saying of King James, that he would like to "pray at King's, dine at Trinity, and sleep at Jesus." The poet's fondness for fine clothes, however it displayed itself, must have been directly fostered by his new surroundings; and his personal graces and accomplishments no doubt made him a favourite companion for those with whom he was willing to associate. It is more than probable that the Master of the college was glad to exhibit its well-born scholar, whose skill in the verbal conceits of his time was soon to delight the pedantic king; and at the visits of the chief justice and his other friends he may have played a part in their entertainment. Possibly his musical skill was also in demand; for Walton says explicitly that during this time music was his chief if not his only recreation. He adds that he became "a great master" of the art, and was wont to explain "That it did relieve his drooping spirits, compose his distracted thoughts, and raised his weary soul so far above earth, that it gave him an earnest of the joys of heaven before he possessed them." His assertion that "as he grew older, so he grew in learning,

and more and more in favour with God and man," may also be accepted so far as it regards merely human approbation; but there is every reason to believe that Herbert, however great were his ambitions, and however his critics may condemn his "elegant sanctity" and liking for pleasant attire, was from the first ruled by strong religious convictions. To some this may appear inconsistent with certain of his actions and official writings; but it offers an explanation of many of his poems, and perhaps furnishes the key to his troubled but profitable experiences of the life of the spiritual man.

Walton's citation of documents—a poem and part of a letter—in proof of his early religious, if not ascetic, bent, is certainly convincing. It suggests, however, that if the ardent young classic had devoted more time to English verse and less to Greek and Latin he would have done better in the efforts of his last years; as Milton's early practice in the vernacular stood him in good stead when composing his great epic. But if, like Wordsworth, he announces himself "a dedicated spirit," and shows in his verses a contempt equal to that of the divorce-favouring Puritan for "vain and amatorious" poetry, his own muse is grievously at fault in spite of his devout intentions. The defects of the poem, however,

are atoned for by the affectionate letter to his mother, in which it was enclosed as a New Year's gift.

". . . But I fear," runs the fragment preserved, "that the heat of my late ague hath dried up those springs by which scholars say the Muses used to take up their habitations. However, I need not their help to reprove the vanity of those many love poems that are daily writ and consecrated to Venus, nor to bewail that so few are writ that look towards God and Heaven. For my own part, my meaning, dear mother, is in these sonnets to declare my resolution to be that my poor abilities in poetry shall be all and ever consecrated to God's glory ; and I beg you to receive this as one testimony :—

" My God, where is that ancient heat towards Thee,
Wherewith whole shoals of martyrs once did burn,
Besides their other flames ? Doth poetry
Wear Venus' livery ?—Only to serve her turn ?
Why are not sonnets made of Thee, and lays
Upon Thine altar burnt ? Cannot Thy love
Heighten a spirit to sound out Thy praise
As well as any she ? Cannot Thy dove
Outstrip their Cupid easily in flight ?
Or, since Thy ways are deep, and still the same,
Will not a verse run smooth that bears Thy name ?
Why doth that fire, which by Thy power and might
Each breast does feel, no braver fuel choose
Than that which one day worms may chance refuse ?

"Sure, Lord, there is enough in Thee to dry
Oceans of ink; for, as the Deluge did
Cover the earth, so doth Thy majesty;
Each cloud distills Thy praise, and doth forbid
Poets to turn it to another use.
Roses and lilies speak Thee; and to make
A pair of cheeks of them is Thy abuse;
Why should I women's eyes for crystal take?
Such poor invention burns in their low mind,
Whose fire is wild, and doth not upward go
To praise, and on Thee, Lord, some ink bestow.
Open the bones, and you shall nothing find
In the best face but filth; when, Lord, in Thee
The beauty lies in the discovery.

"G. H."

There is no lack of force, and indeed of spiritual fire, in the poem, in spite of its many instances of defective taste and its frequent morbidness of thought and feeling (the last due perhaps to the ague from which he had just recovered); but it foreshadows with singular fidelity the work of his maturer years. If it shows the same mixture of gold and dross, and as some may think in the same relative proportion, such lines as these:—

Each cloud distills Thy praise, and doth forbid
Poets to turn it to another use.
Roses and lilies speak Thee——

go far to redeem the others. Assuredly he was no common poetaster if, as Walton says, he was in his seventeenth year when he wrote them; but it is pleasant to know that the professed misogy-

nist of his teens lived to make a happy, if not romantic, marriage in his thirties, and to find human and Divine love not the incompatible qualities he had supposed.

Most of Herbert's biographers have felt it incumbent on themselves to discuss his youthful wit combat with Andrew Melville, the bold but injudicious Scot who attacked and ridiculed, in a Latin poem, the government and usages of the English Church. Much grief and some surprise have been expressed that the future poet of *The Temple* should have employed his pen in confuting an adversary of so much learning and godliness, who was, moreover, well advanced in years, and perhaps at the time in prison for his temerity in this and other things. Neither grief nor surprise need be felt. It is of course regrettable that poets, whether young or old, should fall out, especially in Latin verse. But the poem being what it was, little short of a lampoon on the Anglican Church, and on the Universities for supporting its claims; and the youthful Westminster scholar having the temper and intellectual ability of his race, with a strong affection for his spiritual Mother, the collision was natural and inevitable. Walton tells the story with evident relish for the defeat of the northern champion, from whose party, as he mentions elsewhere, he had himself suffered in the past.

"There was one Andrew Melvin," he says, "a minister of the Scotch Church and rector of St. Andrews, who, by a long and constant converse with a discontented part of that clergy which opposed episcopacy, became at last to be a chief leader of that faction; and had proudly appeared to be so to King James, when he was but King of that nation; who the second year after his coronation in England, convened a part of the bishops and other learned divines of his Church, to attend him at Hampton Court, in order to a friendly conference with some dissenting brethren, both of this and the Church of Scotland; of which Scotch party Andrew Melvin was one; and being a man of learning, and inclined to satirical poetry, had scattered many malicious bitter verses against our liturgy, our ceremonies, and our Church government:[1] which were by some of that party so magnified for the wit, that they were therefore brought into Westminster School, where Mr. George Herbert then, and often after, made such answers to them, and such reflections on him and his kirk, as might unbeguile any man that was not too deeply pre-engaged in such a quarrel."

In a former edition of the same *Life*, Walton had described Melvin, or Melville, as the "master

[1] "Our altars, our prayers, and our public worship of God," in the first edition of the *Life*.

of a great wit; a wit full of knots and clenches; a wit sharp and satirical; exceeded, I think, by none of that nation, but their Buchanan." Here he goes on to call him "a man of an unruly wit, of a strange confidence, of so furious a zeal, and of so ungoverned passions, that his insolence to the King and others at this conference lost him both his rectorship of St. Andrews and his liberty too. For his former verses," he adds, "and his present reproaches there used against the Church and State, caused him to be committed prisoner to the Tower of London, where he remained very angry for three years."

He may well have felt enraged at this treatment by his royal brother Scot, who had summoned him to the conference, not, it should be said, the famous Hampton Court conference of 1604, but a somewhat similar gathering two years later. King James, however, had an old score to settle with his countryman. In 1596, when King of Scotland only, he had had a taste of his "ungoverned passions," and also of his absolute fearlessness; for Melville, who headed a deputation of Scottish ministers on a well-known occasion, had laid violent hands on his person, or at least on his sleeve; calling him "God's silly vassal," and "not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member" of the Church of Christ. Therefore, when

the explosive divine, rebelling against his usage in the council chamber at Whitehall, shook the lawn sleeves of Archbishop Bancroft, and in his presence called them "Romish rags," with other railing against the Anglican hierarchy, it is possible that the memory of his former discomfiture may have caused him to acquiesce more readily in his refractory subject's punishment.

Turning to the substance of the poetical duel, it must be owned that the young scholar shows more moderation than his mature antagonist. Melville's diatribe in its English rendering describes itself as "A Defence on Behalf of the Petition of the Evangelical Ministers in England to the most serene King, against the masked Gorgon of the twin Universities; or Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria." It is, however, much less a defence of the Millenary Petition than a virulent attack on the Anglican Church and its chief rulers. Also, it is in no sense original in its arguments, if such they are, and merely repeats the already old and stock objections of the extreme Puritans to the use of the cross in baptism and the ring in marriage, to set forms of prayer, to the rite of confirmation, the surplice, the churching of women and other things which the Nonconformist conscience of the day regarded as Papistical or profane, including the square cap worn by the

clergy and other members of the Universities, and instrumental music in churches. That, however, which mainly rouses his animosity is the order of bishops: he is full of the swelling pride, the regal luxury, the insolence and the avarice of prelates, who, "twice dipt" in Tyrian dyes, gorge their paunches in high banquets, outvie the revelry of kings, and pollute the house of God with violent and pitiless slaughter. The indictment is severe, even for a time when "proud prelates" and "gorbellied clergie" were popular phrases; and his comparison of the baptismal service to a magical incantation, repeated over the unknowing babe like the screeching of an owl, may have been equally familiar to the dissentients within and without the English Church. The more utterly to crush the priestly band, he hurls upon them the names of the leading reformers at home and abroad: Whitaker, Reynolds, Bucer, Peter Martyr, "Beza hoar," "holy Sandeel," and Calvin—

> Greatest of names that Europe boasts,
> Grandest e'er led the Lord's own hosts.

But of the twin Gorgons of the Thames and the Cam, who have furnished the title of his philippic, he has after all not very much to say, the more tempting themes of prelacy and ritual absorbing his larger powers.

These were the "malicious bitter verses" which Walton says he scattered about him, but which seem to have been in manuscript only, and designed for a limited and strictly private circulation. The same appears to be true of Herbert's reply, or replies; for the forty or more Latin epigrams defending his Church against its adversary's calumnies were not printed until nearly thirty years after his own death; when James Duport, Dean of Peterborough, prepared them for the press, "as an honourable memorial of his friend, Mr. George Herbert, and the cause he undertook." Respecting the date, or dates, of their composition, it is probable that Walton's surmise that they were written while he was at Westminster School, "and often after," may be right, though the greater part were doubtless composed in the early years of his Cambridge life.

In these "Epigrams in Defence of the Discipline of Our Church," he meets the onslaught of his foe somewhat in the style of an adroit fencer, who, with a lighter weapon, parries the thrusts of a heavier but less skilfully handled blade. After a dedication to King James, his son the Prince of Wales, and the Bishop of Winchester (Lancelot Andrewes), he takes up the charges one by one, and without much difficulty disproves them, at least so far as they admit of disproof. He con-

forms to what we may suppose are the rules of epigram warfare; regrets his youth, but hopes his theme and his good sense will excuse him; makes fun of the title of his opponent's poem, and suggests "Anti-Furi-Puri-Categoria," or "Anti-Pelvi-Melvi-Categoria" instead; and defines the limits of the controversy to be the rites of the Church only—upon the subjects of the Deity and the illustrious Continental divines they are both agreed. It does not seem necessary to follow him through the entire list of things aspersed by his enemy—and by him defended—the manual cross, the articles of religion, the surplice, the marriage ring, the four-square cap, and others; but it is significant that his defence of legitimate ritual is exactly what would be made, and in fact is made, to-day. He points out that if ceremonies right in themselves have been abused and tarnished in the past—"poisoned by Papal breath," as he puts it—that is no reason for discarding them:—

> If all misusèd things were due to death,
> 'Tis time our souls and bodies were no more.

Again, it is of significance that he expresses no dislike, but on the contrary admiration, for the Continental reformers whom his adversary has thrown at the heads of the Anglicans: "world-famed Calvin," "Bucer erudite," Peter Martyr,

Beza and the rest; but he asserts that their names are wrongly employed, and that their owners were not really opposed to the English Church. This was doubtless the feeling of most of the English Churchmen of his time. He goes on to point out his own moderation as a controversialist, and to compliment his adversary as a poet:—

> I have not call'd thee in my verse
> "Fierce," "ridic'lous," "absurd," or worse:
> I do not give thee back in taunt
> "Screech-owls," "magic-circles," "avaunt":
> . . . . . .
> Nay, with my praise I thee adorn,
> Nor to place thee with Cæsar scorn:
> Cæsar sober found alone
> In the Commonwealth o'erthrown.
> And now thee alone I see,
> Midst thy brutal company
> That seeks to wreck our Church august,
> And hurl it prone unto the dust,
> Thoroughly learned and poet, such
> As words are weak to praise too much.[1]

The sum of this greatly magnified encounter may be said to be that George Herbert, true to the chivalrous instincts of his house, took up arms for his spiritual Mother, and defended her with success; as one of his duelling brothers might have championed some injured lady's cause with the arm of the flesh.

[1] Grosart's translation.

In the early part of his academic life Herbert also contributed to the collections of verse published at Cambridge, a Latin poem on the death of the queen of James I., Anne of Denmark, and two Latin poems on the death of Prince Henry of Wales ; and he doubtless supplied his quota of the lachrymal and other effusions which it was the custom of members of the University to pin to the curtains at Great St. Mary's Church, and elsewhere, on occasions of public mourning or the reverse. His English poem addressed to the Queen of Bohemia may also date from his early years at Cambridge.

CHAPTER V

ORATOR AND THEOLOGIAN

TO his connection with the University, as its orator and official mouth-piece, the poet owed his introduction to the notice of King James, and his hopes of a larger public career. The relations of the two Universities to the Crown had always been close, the successive sovereigns having jealously guarded their rights, though exacting a strict homage and obedience in return. With Queen Elizabeth and the first two Stuarts this relationship became even more intimate. They looked to Oxford and Cambridge for the instruments necessary to carry out their schemes,—the men who were to fill the higher offices of State as judges, bishops, diplomatists and ministers in all capacities. Not that they were unregardful of "good science and learning;" but before all else the two intellectual centres of the kingdom must support their prerogative, so that it was a sound piece of statecraft to win or bend them to their side. Sharp and searching inquisitions, royally

ordered by archbishops, chancellors, and others, had been common in the past. "Sirrah, Mr. Vice-Chancellor! What is this we hear? Give an account of yourself and your charge," had in effect formed their purport; and by James the First there was no relaxation of vigilance. The canons ecclesiastical of the year after his accession ordered the "prescript form" of divine service to be used in all the colleges, and students to wear the surplice at the chapel services and to receive the Communion four times a year; also subscription to the king's supremacy, the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-Nine Articles was enjoined on the clergy, with strict adherence to the rules of "decency in apparel," which were set down with the usual minuteness. Opposition by members of the University to the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England was forbidden, under severe penalties. How far these ordinances were obeyed at Cambridge is not wholly clear; but if there was much opposition at some of the colleges, at Trinity the Master, despite his doctrinal Calvinism, probably enforced outward compliance with the Anglican ritual.

The University of Cambridge was the first to institute the office of public orator. The date of its creation was 1522, or possibly earlier, and its duties were exhaustively set forth by statute.

The new official, by this instrument, was required to write letters on behalf of the learned corporation whenever desired by the chancellor and proctors;[1] he was also obliged to welcome in "a learned and elaborate" Latin speech all princes and other magnates, native or foreign, who might pay them a visit. So important were his functions held to be that, if compelled to be absent for more than two or three days, he was required to appoint a suitable deputy; and he had inevitably to wear a gown of a prescribed pattern, which was to be of "ordinary" or "watered" silk. Certain privileges were assigned to him and his successors.

[1] Fuller gives the names and dates of election of the twenty-three holders of the office from its institution to his own time; the first being Richard Croke or Crook, the Greek scholar and epigrammatist who shortly after became a Fellow of St. John's College—in 1523 or 1524. The demand for clerical services similar to those which they performed appears to have existed for some time. "True it is," he says, "that before the solemn founding of the Orator's office some were procured on occasion to discharge the same. Thus we find one Caius Auberinus, an Italian (for that age indifferently learned), who (some twenty years since) had twenty pence a-piece for every Latin letter he wrote for the University. Henceforth we had one standing Orator, whose place was assigned unto him next unto the Doctors of Physic." As Fuller wrote more than a hundred years after the post was established, the phrase "some twenty years since" probably means that space of time before the election of its first occupant; but it was obviously a matter of satisfaction to him that its duties were no longer left to casual and indifferently learned foreigners.

Among them it was provided that the orator, if a Master of Arts, should take precedence of all other Masters of Arts, and rank immediately after the Doctors of Law and of Medicine. In processions he was to walk alone; and he enjoyed a separate place of honour in all other public proceedings, this and the other privileges mentioned still belonging to the office. The right of being a "Regent," namely, a resident teacher in the University, or a "non-Regent"—one who had formerly been a member of the teaching body, but had ceased to teach—lay also within the orator's choice; and another prerogative was the right, often exercised, of presenting noblemen or their sons for the complete degree of Master of Arts, *jure natalium*, and without examination. Regents and non-Regents, however, are now obsolete terms; and the University Commission of 1857 abolished the latter invidious privilege, at the same time making better provision for conferring titular and other honorary degrees on persons of distinction.

The office was not intended to be merely an ornamental one. On the contrary, it was instituted as a practical means of securing the goodwill of influential persons in the outer world by paying them compliments (in elegant Latin) when they visited the University. The writing of letters, in the same tongue, to obtain privileges for the

academic body, or to defend or maintain its existing privileges, was an especially important part of the office, together with conveying thanks for services rendered by Secretaries of State and others, and for gifts of all kinds. At the present time, most of the official letters written by the public orator are epistles of thanks for great benefactions, and of congratulations to other Universities on their commemoration of jubilees or centenaries; while his strictly oratorical efforts are called forth by royal and other distinguished visits, the conferring of honorary degrees, and like public occasions.

Such was the office, demanding the courtier's gifts as well as the graces of scholarship, which the future poet of the Church desired ardently and sought with eagerness. The energy and persistence with which, in its procurement, he solicited the influence of his relatives and friends, have been thought derogatory to his character; but what we now know of the natural bent of his mind must lead us to another conclusion. George Herbert, like all his brothers, was ambitious and aspiring; sloth and idleness at all times moved his severest censure; and the office was one for which his classical accomplishments had especially fitted him. The first lines of his poem "Employment"—

He that is weary, let him sit,
My soul would stir
And trade in courtesies and wit,
Quitting the fur,
To cold complexions needing it—

are a self-drawn portrait of his disposition; and it will be seen later that he did not think the duties of the office opposed to his religious principles. Doubtless he believed that his peculiar powers and attainments would best be exercised by such a post; possibly even then he had in view the high public places to which it had led others in the past. Walton's account of this important step in his career is marked by his usual simplicity and directness. After describing his earlier life at college, and his academic degrees, he writes :—

"In the year 1619 he was chosen Orator for the University. His two precedent orators were Sir Robert Naunton and Sir Francis Nethersole. The first was not long after made Secretary of State; and Sir Francis, not very long after his being orator, was made secretary to the Lady Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia. In this place of orator our George Herbert continued eight years, and managed it with as becoming and grave a gaiety as any had ever before or since his time. For he had acquired great learning, and was blest with a high fancy, a civil and sharp wit, and

with a natural elegance, both in his behaviour, his tongue, and his pen."

Walton then goes on to relate three separate instances of this happy facility: the first being his effusive acknowledgment of King James's *Basilicon Doron*, the second his reply to Andrew Melville's "Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria" (which obviously had nothing to do with his oratorship, and was probably written some time before), and the third his skilful captivation of the erudite monarch on his visits to Royston, Newmarket and Cambridge. Here, however, it may be best to give Herbert's letters at or near this period which have been preserved, as they certainly suggest a confusion if not a direct contradiction of purposes. The first in the order commonly printed is addressed to Sir John Danvers, the youthful knight who, as will be related in another place, had become his mother's second husband and his own generous friend. It is dated "Trinity College, March 18, 1617," and refers to his theological studies, the poet being then twenty-four years of age :—

"Sir,—I dare no longer be silent, lest while I think I am modest I wrong both myself and also the confidence my friends have in me: wherefore I will open my case unto you, which I think deserves the reading at least; and it is this, I want

books extremely. You know, sir, how I am now setting foot into divinity, to lay the platform of my future life, and shall I then be fain always to borrow books and build on another's foundation? What tradesman is there who will set up without his tools? Pardon my boldness, sir: it is a most serious case; nor can I write coldly in that wherein consisteth the making good of my former education, of obeying that Spirit which hath guided me hitherto, and of achieving my (I dare say) holy ends. This also is aggravated, in that I apprehend what my friends would have been forward to say if I had taken to ill courses: 'Follow your book, and you shall want nothing.' You know, sir, it is their ordinary speech, and now let them make it good: for since I hope to have not deceived their expectations, let them not deceive mine. But perhaps they will say, 'You are sickly: you must not study too hard.' It is true, God knows, I am weak, yet not so but that every day I may step one step towards my journey's end; and I love my friends so well, as that if all things proved not well, I had rather the fault should lie on me than on them. But they will object again: 'What becomes of your annuity?' Sir, if there be any truth in me, I find it little enough to keep me in health. You know I was sick last vacation, neither am I yet recovered; so that I am fain, ever and

anon, to buy somewhat tending towards my health, for infirmities are both painful and costly. Now this Lent I am forbid utterly to eat any fish, so that I am fain to diet in my chamber at mine own cost; for in our public halls, you know, is nothing but fish and white meats; out of Lent, also, twice a week, on Fridays and Saturdays, I must do so, which yet I sometimes fast. Sometimes also I ride to Newmarket, and there lie a day or two for fresh air; all which tend to avoiding of costlier matters if I should fall absolutely sick. I protest and vow I even study thrift, and yet I am scarce able with much ado to make one half-year's allowance shake hands with the other; and yet if a book of four or five shillings come in my way, I buy it, though I fast for it—yea, sometimes of ten shillings. But, alas! sir, what is that to those infinite volumes of divinity, which yet every day swell and grow bigger? Noble sir, pardon my boldness, and consider but these three things. First, the bulk of divinity; secondly, the time when I desire this (which is now, when I must lay the foundation of my whole life); thirdly, what I desire, and to what end,—not vain pleasures, nor to a vain end. If then, sir, there be any course, either by engaging my future annuity, or any other way, I desire you, sir, to be my mediator to them in my behalf.

"Now I write to you, sir, because to you I have

ever opened my heart; and have reason, by the patents of your perpetual favour to do so still, for I am sure you love your faithfullest servant,

"George Herbert."

The urgency of the appeal, with the twice-repeated motive, that he was laying the platform or the foundation of his whole life, seems to leave no room for doubt that his intention was to take orders in the Church, though he does not say so expressly. Yet his next letter, probably written not more than a year or two later, finds him anxiously seeking the orator's place and describing its attractions. Like the other, it is addressed to his step-father, but it bears no date:—

"Sir,—This week hath loaded me with your favours: I wish I could have come in person to thank you, but it is not possible. Presently after Michaelmas I am to make an oration to the whole University of an hour long in Latin, and my Lincoln journey hath set me much behindhand; neither can I so much as go to Bugden and deliver your letter, yet I have sent it thither by a faithful messenger this day. I beseech you all, and my dear mother and sister, to pardon me, for my Cambridge necessities are stronger to tie me here than yours to London. If I could possibly have come, none should have done my message

to Sir Fr. Nethersole for me: he and I are ancient acquaintance, and I have a strong opinion of him, that if he can do me a courtesy he will of himself; yet your appearing in it affects me strangely. I have sent you here enclosed a letter from our Master on my behalf, which if you can send to Sir Francis before his departure, it will do well, for it expresseth the University's inclination to me; yet if you cannot send it with much convenience, it is no matter, for the gentleman needs no incitation to love me.

"The Orator's place (that you may understand what it is) is the finest place in the University, though not the gainfullest; yet that will be about thirty pounds per annum; but the commodiousness is beyond the revenue; for the Orator writes all the University letters, makes all the orations, be it to king, prince, or whatever comes to the University. To requite these pains he takes place next the doctors, is at all their assemblies and meetings, and sits above the proctors, is regent or non-regent at his pleasure, and such like gaynesses which will please a young man well.

"I long to hear from Sir Francis. I pray, sir, send the letter you receive from him to me as soon as you can, that I may work the heads to my purpose. I hope I shall get this place without all your London helps, of which I am very proud—

not but that I enjoy in your favours, but that you may see that if all fail, yet I am able to stand on mine own legs. Noble sir, I thank you for your infinite favours; I fear only that I have omitted some fitting circumstance, yet you will pardon my haste, which is very great, though never so but that I have both time and work to be your extreme servant,

"George Herbert."

Here evidently is a different frame of mind, possibly due in part to an improved physical state; for he makes no references to ill-health and dietary matters, or to enforced absences from Cambridge. The long oration he is to deliver "to the whole University" was perhaps intended to exhibit his powers as a speaker; or he may have been acting as deputy to his predecessor, Sir Francis Nethersole. The "Master" from whom he encloses a letter was of course the Master of Trinity, at the date of his writing (probably 1618) John Richardson; Dean Nevile having died in 1615. A third letter to his step-father from his college, this time dated 19th January, 1619, shows the election to be near at hand, and is also noteworthy for its affectionate reference to his ailing sister Elizabeth (the wife of Sir Henry Jones), who died some years later after a lingering and painful illness :—

"Sir,—I have received the things you sent me safe; and now the only thing I long for is to hear of my dear sick sister. First, how her health fares; next, whether my peace be yet made with her concerning my unkind departure. Can I be so happy as to hear of both these that they succeed well? Is it not too much for me? Good sir, make it plain to her that I loved her even in my departure, in looking to her son, and my charge. I suppose she is not disposed to spend her eyesight on a piece of paper, or else I had wrote to her: when I shall understand that a letter would be seasonable my pen is ready. Concerning the orator's place, all goes well yet: the next Friday it is tried, and accordingly you shall hear. I have forty businesses in my hands; your courtesy will pardon the haste of your humblest servant,

"George Herbert."

A fourth letter dated from his college to Sir John Danvers is that of the 6th of October, 1619, though its tenor seems to show that it was written before his final election to the oratorship. It is of interest from its evidence that some of his friends felt the same difficulty in reconciling his theological studies with his new ambition that we feel ourselves. Herbert's own view of the case, however, is expressed with sufficient clearness:—

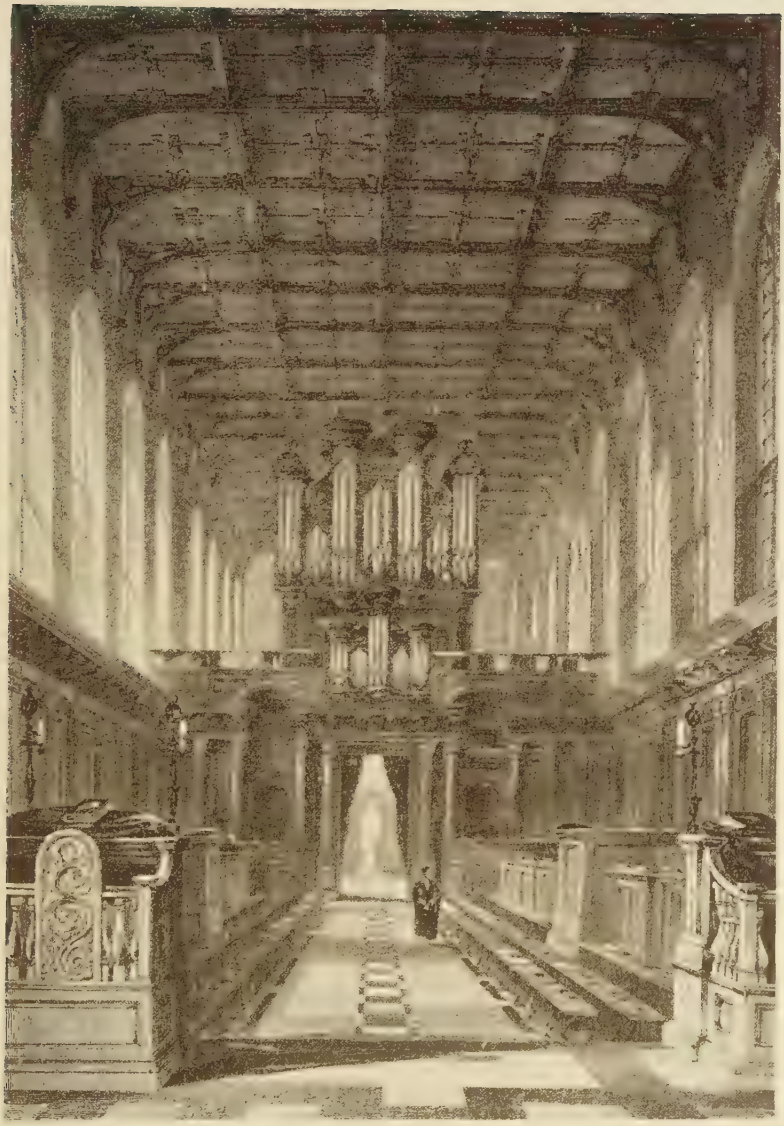
"Sir,—I understand by Sir Francis Nethersole's letter that he fears I have not fully resolved of the matter, since this place being civil may divert me too much from divinity, at which, not without cause, he thinks I aim; but I have wrote him back that this dignity hath no such earthiness in it but it may very well be joined with heaven; or if it had to others, yet to me it should not, for aught I yet know; and therefore I desire him to send me a direct answer in his next letter. I pray, sir, therefore, cause this enclosed to be carried to his brother's house of his own name (as I think), at the sign of the Pedlar and the Pack on London Bridge, for there he assigns me. I cannot yet find leisure to write to my lord or Sir Benjamin Ruddyard, but I hope I shall shortly, though for the reckoning of your favours I shall never find time and paper enough, yet I am your readiest servant,

"George Herbert.

"I remember my most humble duty to my mother, who cannot think me lazy, since I rode 200 miles to see a sister, in a way I knew not, in the midst of much business, and all in a fortnight, not long since."

A fifth letter, "To the truly noble Sir John Danvers," is undated, and, as it is chiefly concerned with the purchase of books—presumably of theo-

logy—may belong to the earlier time before the fascinating vision of the oratorship had crossed his sight. It is noteworthy for the following passage, in which his intention to take orders in the Church seems to be distinctly expressed: "yet I had rather fly to my old ward, that if any course should be taken of doubling my annuity now, upon condition that I should surcease from all title to it *after I entered into a benefice*, I should be most glad to entertain it, and both pay for the surplusage of these books, and forever after cease my clamorous and greedy bookish requests. It is high time now that I should be no more a burden to you, since I can never answer what I have already received." The annuity which, if now doubled to meet his "greedy bookish" desires, he proposes to forego after obtaining ecclesiastical preferment, was no doubt the one allowed him by his family; the amount, according to his brother Edward, was £30 per annum, this sum having been apportioned to each of the younger brothers of the house. So definite a proposal can only mean that the poet, at the moment of writing, intended to enter the Church as one of its ministers at an early date after the completion of his theological studies; for it can hardly refer to the sinecure afterwards bestowed on him by King James.



INTERIOR OF CHAPEL, TRINITY COLLEGE

FROM LE KEUX'S ENGRAVING

Two further letters belonging to this crucial period of his life may be given here. The one to his younger brother Henry (the future master of the revels), who was then in France, is marked by the worldly wisdom and practical sense shown in all his writings on strictly mundane subjects :—

" Brother,—The disease which I am troubled with now is the shortness of time, for it hath been my fortune of late to have such sudden warning, that I have not leisure to impart unto you some of those observations which I have framed to myself in conversation, and whereof I would not have you ignorant. As I shall find occasion you shall receive them by pieces ; and if there be any such which you have found useful to yourself, communicate them to me. You live in a brave nation, where, except you wink, you cannot but see many brave examples. Be covetous, then, of all good which you see in Frenchmen, whether it be in knowledge, or in fashion, or in words ; for I would have you, even in speeches, to observe so much, as when you meet with a witty French speech, try to speak the like in English ; so shall you play a good merchant, by transporting French commodities to your own country. Let there be no kind of excellency which it is possible for you to attain to which you seek not, and have a good conceit of

your wit ; mark what I say, have a good conceit of your wit : that is, be proud, not with a foolish vaunting of yourself when there is no cause, but by setting a just price of your qualities ; and it is the part of a poor spirit to undervalue himself and blush. But I am out of my time ; when I have more time you shall hear more ; and write you freely to me in your letters, for I am your ever loving brother,

"George Herbert.

"*P.S.*—My brother is somewhat of the same temper, and perhaps a little more mild, but you will hardly perceive it.

"To my dear brother, Mr. Henry Herbert, at Paris."

The other letter, "For my dear sick sister," is dated from Trinity College, 6th December, 1620, in the year after his election as orator. Like all his family correspondence which has been preserved, it is marked by great affection and tenderness ; also it is clear that the pleasing "gaynesses" of his new official life had not as yet affected the spiritual quality of his mind, if indeed they ever did so :—

"Most Dear Sister,—Think not my silence forgetfulness, or that my love is as dumb as my papers ; though business may stop my hand, yet

my heart, a much better member, is always with you; and which is more, with our good and gracious God, incessantly begging some ease of your pains, with that earnestness that becomes your griefs and my love. God, who knows and sees this writing, knows also that my soliciting Him has been much, and my tears many for you; judge me then by those waters, and not by my ink, and then you shall justly value your most truly, most heartily affectionate brother and servant,

"George Herbert."

With the grave gaiety and other qualities praised by Walton, the poet discharged for eight years the delicate duties of the oratorship, though in his later absences from Cambridge turning them over to his deputy, Herbert Thorndyke. If in obtaining the office he had solicited the influence of his kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Benjamin Ruddyard and others, as well as that of the retiring orator, Sir Francis Nethersole, with a somewhat persistent urgency, there is no doubt that he filled it with distinction and success. To give at length, either in Latin or in English translations, the more noteworthy of his recorded official performances, does not seem needful. He has been accused of excessive adulation in his postal addresses to persons with whom he was anxious

to ingratiate himself; but the charge does not seem just. For one thing, it was an age of notorious flattery in all formal letters and addresses—and in many that were not formal—both to equals and to superiors; for another, as he explains in a letter of advice to his successor, Robert Creichton, the public orator speaks not for himself but for the University. Probably that reverend body was as well pleased with the effusions of its chosen mouthpiece as were those to whom they were addressed, or whose virtues they celebrated—at least there is no mention to the contrary.

The public orations of George Herbert are characteristic of place, time, and individual bias. That on the "most auspicious" return of Prince Charles from Madrid, after the breaking off of the Spanish match, is an effort of great loyalty, if its tone of exuberant joyfulness may seem to us a little forced. Addressed to the "Venerable Heads, Most Worshipful Sirs, and Most Select Youth" (*Veranda Capita, Viri Gravissimi, Pubes Lectissima*) of his University, it begins with a familiar classical instance, followed by many more. When Polycrates, after throwing into the sea a much-valued ring, found it again in the body of a captured fish, he was deemed the most fortunate of mortals. Even more fortunate are they, the

Muses' Crown (*Corona Musica*), who, having committed their prince to the sea in the hope of espousals, have received him back safely ; and with him the marriage-ring (*annulum conjugalem*), now once more their own, and to be disposed of afresh anywhere in the world, according to the judgment of a king most wise and experienced in human and divine affairs. The orator dilates on the importance of marriage in general, and especially that of princes, since the higher their condition the more care is required. He urges the necessity of good mothers : " When the foundation of the race is not rightly laid, it must needs be that the offspring turn out badly." The journey having been undertaken in the interests of peace—for peace would have resulted from the Spanish marriage—he regrets as a patriot the failure of the expedition. Incidentally he draws a startling picture of the horrors of war ; but the strongest note of the composition is that of pleasure at the prince's safe return. The oration, " when the Ambassadors were made Masters of Arts " (27th February, 1622), is an example of high and somewhat flowery compliment to distinguished foreign diplomatists ; but as the orator probably did not have personal ends in view in flattering Don Carlos de Coloma, ambassador of Spain, and Ferdinand, Baron of Boyscot, ambassador of Isabella, Arch-

duchess of Austria, his praise of those "most excellent and most magnificent lords" may be considered as merely perfunctory. Possibly, however, his attributing to the Spanish king (Philip IV.) an "exceeding glory equally round with the world itself," and to his own sovereign the character of a protecting saint if not of a human deity, may have exceeded the licence even of academic eulogium.

His official letters are in the same strain of ultra-laudation—doubtless no other style would have been acceptable either to the University or to the high personages to whom they were addressed. Several are letters of thanks (*gratiæ de fluvio*) to the Secretary of State, Sir Robert Naunton, and to Fulke Greville, Bacon, and the king himself, for preserving the Cam from supposed injury by the draining of the Fens by certain bold speculators. The "shores of Grantburgshire" were still washed, but not cleansed, by the shallow inland sea that had borne the barge of King Canute past the singing monks of Ely; and the residents of Cambridge, both town and gown, believed that reclaiming the great morass which most of it had now become would destroy their chief means of communication with the sea and the outer world. We know that the result was otherwise; and if the orator had guessed that his

continual agues were probably due to its vapours, he might have qualified his gratitude. As it was he feared that from want of water the colleges would be abandoned, and the "beautiful dwellings of the Muses" become "like worn-out widows or sapless withered logs." His letters to the king, on receiving his gift to the University already mentioned of the *Basilicon Doron*, and his congratulation of the royal favourite, Buckingham, on his elevation to the marquisate, are cited as the most fulsome of these courtly epistles; and they cannot be said to fall short of his orations in this respect. The poet's ever-active invention seems to have drained the resources of euphuism in evolving high-flown metaphors in which to dress the subjects of his praise; but if he goes so far as to tell the conceited monarch that his "right hand alone quickens the globe with life and action" (*vestra solum dextra . . . vita et actione orbem vegetat*), the royal philosopher had himself pointed out some years before the surprising resemblance of kingly to divine functions. The letters to Bacon, in acknowledgment of his *Instauratio*, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the London booksellers, with those to Thomas Coventry, Sir Robert Heath, and others, are perhaps less inflated in style; but altogether these Latin panegyrics cannot be regarded as of any

deep moral significance. To-day they read like mere exercises of verbal wit, and suggest the essays of some clever schoolboy who has copied only too faithfully the rhetorical faults of his models.

The true George Herbert of this time is not to be found in these perfunctory flights. Whatever superficial paganism they may show, his family correspondence proves him to be unchanged; he is the same tender brother and son, and the same earnest spiritual counsellor—in a word, the theologian and priest of the scattered household. His letter to his invalid sister was written in the same year (1620) as his acknowledgment of the *Basilicon Doron*, and only a year after his congratulation of Buckingham. Two years later (1622) he wrote the long letter to his mother in her illness, which is given in another place. Formal and deferential as it is, it speaks with the authority of the completely furnished divine. Indeed, all through his oratorship, and his somewhat mysterious Court life, the poet seems to have been, like Addison, a "parson in a tye-wig," or at least in a watered-silk gown. This dual existence may easily have entangled him, as he says, "in a world of strife;" but we have his word that it was not in his power for some time to change his state.

CHAPTER VI

HERBERT AS A COURTIER

THE strange being to whom the poet owed his introduction to the pleasures and perils of a Court life was distinguished by an ambition seldom recorded of ruling sovereigns. Sir John Harington, the witty if somewhat scurrilous translator of *Orlando Furioso*, tells us that King James in a private interview asked him with much seriousness "whether a king should not be the best clerk in his own country, and if this land did not entertain good opinion of his learning and good wisdom?" The author of no small array of volumes, political, poetical, and meditative—of the *Demonology* and the *Basilicon Doron*, the *Counterblast to Tobacco*, the *True Law of Free Monarchies*, and a *Meditation on the Lord's Prayer*—the pacific monarch was at least a creditable clerk; and the gatherings about his table, though suggesting our competitive examinations for public posts, were doubtless agreeable. The

testimony of Bishop Hackett, in his *Life* of Lord Keeper Williams, is emphatic on this point :—

"That King's table," he says admiringly, "was a trial of wits. The reading of some books before him was frequent, while he was at his repast. Otherwise [in other ways] he collected knowledge by variety of questions. . . . Methought his hunting humour was not off so long as his courtiers, I mean the learned, stood about his board. He was ever in chase after some disputable doubts, which he would wind and turn about with the most stabbing objections that I ever heard; and was so pleasant and fellow-like in all those discourses as with his huntsmen in the field. They that in many such genial and convivial conferences were ripe and weighty in their answers were indubiously designed to some place of credit and profit."

If the University life of George Herbert gives us some definite landmarks, we lose them almost at once on approaching his life at Court. Here Walton only can lead us; but, on the whole, we can trust his guidance, except possibly in the matter of dates, which, however, he prudently avoids as a rule in this portion of his narrative. His account of the poet's introduction to the king is somewhat familiar. "The first notable occasion of showing his fitness for this employment of orator," he says, "was manifested in a letter to

King James upon the occasion of his sending that University his book, called *Basilicon Doron ;* and their Orator was to acknowledge this great honour, and return their gratitude to his Majesty for such a condescension ; at the close of which letter he writ :—

"*Quid Vaticanam Bodleiumque objicis hospes ! Unicus est nobis Bibliotheca Liber.*"

The work in question, which Herbert acknowledged in his public capacity on 18th May, 1620, consisted of a series of pedagogic precepts in religion, morals, and the art of government, addressed by James to "his dearest son, Henry the Prince." He had written it twenty years before ; and in view of its prevailingly dull and commonplace character—except where the angry sovereign fulminates against the "false and unreverent writing and speaking of malicious men" about himself and his predecessors, and those whom he calls "Puritans, very pests in the Church and commonweal" —the orator's comparison of it to the libraries of Rome and Oxford ("a single book is library to us") would have been fulsome under ordinary conditions. But the men of that age saw and addressed their sovereign under conditions the reverse of ordinary ; and the poet's letter, we are told, was composed in such excellent Latin, and so full of the conceits and expressions "suited to the

genius of the King," that the delighted monarch inquired the writer's name. Asking William, Earl of Pembroke, if he knew him, that nobleman replied, doubtless with the satisfaction we all feel at the praise of our personal connections, "that he knew him very well and that he was his kinsman; but he loved him more for his learning and virtue, than for that he was of his name and family." At which answer the king, no doubt in the fellow-like manner admired by Bishop Hackett, smiled, and desired of the earl "that he might love him too; for he took him to be the jewel of that University."

As already pointed out, Walton's next instance, the Melville episode, does not seem proper to this place; but his third and last "observation" explains the orator's personal acquaintance with the king:—

"About this time," he says, "King James came very often to hunt at Newmarket and Royston, and was almost as often invited to Cambridge, where his entertainment was comedies suited to his pleasant humour; and where Mr. George Herbert was to welcome him with gratulations and the applauses of an orator, which he always performed so well that he still grew more into the King's favour, insomuch that he had a particular appointment to attend his Majesty at Royston;

where, after a discourse with him, his Majesty declared to his kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke, 'That he found the Orator's learning and wisdom much above his age or wit.' The year following[1] the King appointed to end his progress at Cambridge, and to stay there certain days; at which time he was attended by the great secretary of nature and all learning, Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam), and by the ever-memorable and learned Dr. Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, both which did at that time begin a desired friendship with our Orator; upon whom the first put such a value on his judgment that he usually desired his approbation before he would expose any of his books to be printed, and thought him so worthy of his friendship that, having translated many of the prophet David's psalms into English verse, he made George Herbert his patron by a public dedication of them to him, as the best judge of Divine poetry. And for the learned Bishop it is observable that at that time there fell to be a modest debate betwixt them two about predestination and sanctity of life: of both which the Orator did, not long after, send the Bishop some safe and useful aphorisms, in a long letter written in Greek; which letter was so remarkable for the language and reason of it that, after reading it, the

[1] What year?

Bishop put it into his bosom and did often show it to many scholars, both of this and foreign nations; but did always return it back to the place where he first lodged it, and continued it so near his heart till the last day of his life."[1]

This of course is a very full and not unconvincing account of Herbert's first relations with his royal patron, as well as of his meeting with Bacon and Andrewes; but as Walton gives no dates we can only surmise that the events took place somewhere between the poet's election to the oratorship in 1619[2] and the king's death, six years later. James had long been in the habit of hunting and otherwise disporting himself at Royston and Newmarket. He built houses for his own and his followers' use at both places; the house at Newmarket existing at the present day as a Congregational chapel, while the remains of the Royston "palace" are still pointed out. In his time coursing, hawking and hunting were the favourite sports at the former place; and at Royston the great cost of the royal maintenance was strongly objected to by the country people, who, in an anonymous message, fastened to the collar

[1] This letter has never been found; but another letter from Herbert to Andrewes, written in Latin, is preserved in the British Museum (Sloan MS., 118).

[2] 1620 by our time.

of his hound Jowler, politely requested him to return to London, as all their provisions were spent and they were "not able to entertain him longer." It is somewhat remarkable that, although Newmarket was only thirteen and Royston six miles from Cambridge, the king did not visit the University for over ten years, notwithstanding that he had already favoured the more distant Oxford. On his journey from Edinburgh to London, in 1603, he had stayed at Sir Oliver Cromwell's house at Hinchinbrooke, where the "Heads of the Universitie . . . all clad in scarlet gownes and corner cappes" had waited on him with the inevitable Latin orations; but his first recorded entry into Cambridge was on the 7th of March, 1614-15. This was five years before Herbert obtained the Oratorship, and therefore cannot be one of Walton's occasions when he welcomed his sovereign with gratulations and applauses; but being the first glimpse of the royal person enjoyed by the town and the colleges, it assumed the importance of a national if not a cosmic event. It was described at length by contemporary letter and journal writers, and made the subject of a small anthology of Latin and English verses, most of them humorous or satirical. Herbert, who was then a Minor Fellow of his college, doubtless saw the king more than once, and possibly took some

part in his entertainment; but the official plaudits of the University were delivered by his "precedent Orator," Sir Francis Nethersole.

News of the coming event fluttered the academic dovecotes many weeks in advance. In January the corporation sent to Oxford at the expense of forty shillings "to inquire after the manere of the intertaynment of the King there;" and elaborate preparations were made to equal or outdo their rival's performance. Cups, gloves, and other articles "for the Kinge's Majesties better intertayning" were ordered to be purchased; and both town and University issued strict rules for public dress and behaviour in the august presence. The aldermen were to appear in scarlet gowns and velvet tippets, the bailiffs in murrey gowns and caps, and others of the corporation in black burgess suits, while the mayor was supplied with two footmen in jackets and "other necessary attire." The streets were freshly gravelled, many of the colleges were painted, and the fronts of the old parish churches swept clean of dust. The orders of the vice-chancellor and heads to the members of the University were minute and impressive. All were to appear in their proper habits; all students were to attend regularly at their lectures and the disputations in the schools; none might resort to any inn, tavern, ale-house, or tobacco-

shop; "nor presume to take tobacco in St. Maries Church or in Trinity College Hall, upon payne of final expellinge the Universitie." As usual, the wearing of light or fantastic garments, such as "strange pekadivelas, vast bands, huge cuffs, shoe-roses," and the like, was sternly prohibited. The old passion for picturesque shows, however, asserted itself in the orders to the three proproctors; who were to marshal the graduates and students in symmetrical ranks on the days of the king's arrival and departure—doctors, bachelors, non-regents, fellow-commoners, and B.A.'s, in due succession, each in his proper dress and ready to acclaim the sovereign as he passed.

This being the king's first visit, the preparations were doubtless on an exceptional scale. James and his son, Prince Charles, arrived on the 7th of March, and were met at the borough boundaries by the corporation; the recorder welcoming them in a speech equally exalting the royal pair and the venerable body of which he was the spokesman. As an example of lofty municipal eloquence, in which history, mythology, and the flowers of rhetoric are bravely blended with local geography, the effort can hardly ever have been surpassed in its kind. A letter from John Chamberlain, the Horace Walpole of his age, to Sir Dudley Carleton, at Turin, gives some interesting particulars of the royal

sojourn. "The weather was hard," he says, and the ways foul, so that the splendour of the king's entry was diminished. The queen was not with him, owing to an error of the chancellor; nor were there any foreign ambassadors, which was reckoned a fault. There were very few ladies, "but of the Howards, or that alliance." The lord treasurer lodged and kept his table—at a cost, it was said, of £1,000 a day—at St. John's College; while the king and the prince lay at Trinity. Here, in the great hall built by the master, Dean Nevile, the plays were represented. The first night's entertainment was a Latin comedy entitled *Æmilia*, by a member of St. John's College; and on the second night the celebrated Latin play called "Ignoramus," by George Ruggle, a Fellow of Clare Hall, was acted. This Chamberlain describes as "full of mirth and variety, with many excellent actors . . . but more than half marred with extreme length." The performance, however, despite its literary merits, greatly nettled the lawyers, especially the lord chief justice, Sir Edward Coke, who was supposed to have been alluded to in some of its passages; but the king, although accused of falling asleep, enjoyed it so much that he came a second time to Cambridge to see it repeated. The third night he witnessed an English comedy called "Albumazar," and on the

INTERIOR OF HALL, TRINITY COLLEGE

FROM LE KUEN'S ENGRAVING

last a Latin pastoral, "excellently written, and as well acted, which gave great contentment, as well to the king as the rest." The usual scholastic acts and disputations were also attended by the king and the prince, with more or less satisfaction; but the University orator, Sir Francis Nethersole, appears to have seriously compromised his character for Latinity. "Though he be a proper man, and think well of himself," says Chamberlain, "yet he is taxed for calling the Prince *Jacobissime Carole:* and some will needs add that he called him *Jacobule* too; which neither pleased the King nor anybody else." Rendered into English as "most Jacob Charles," the unlucky conceit pointed a hundred puns and epigrams, chiefly by Oxford wits, and the blunder was certainly never repeated by Herbert in his public capacity. It is noteworthy that Lancelot Andrewes, then Bishop of Ely, gave the performers in the Philosophy Act twenty angels apiece; though it is not clear that he was present at the time. The king, after visiting most of the colleges, commended them "above Oxford," which did not please certain members of the sister University. Many degrees were conferred; but the University appears to have refused that of Doctor of Divinity in the case of the poet Donne ("John Dun," Chamberlain calls him), although the honour was commanded

by the king. Eventually, as we know, the degree was given. This truly noble entertainment was the last ever provided at Trinity by the generous Nevile, who was even then stricken with paralysis, and died soon after.

The next visit of the king was in the May of the same year, when the play of "Ignoramus" was acted a second time by his command. It was on this occasion that he complained that care had not been taken to prevent the "tediosity" of some of the proceedings. Altogether, and in spite of Walton's intimation to the contrary, only four visits of the king are officially recorded. The first two were in 1614-15; the third was in 1622-23, shortly after Herbert became orator; and the fourth and last was in 1624, the year before the king died. Of this final visit not very much is said. The Prince of Wales, soon to become king as Charles I., was one of the party; and the treaty with France for his marriage with the Princess Henrietta Maria was ratified in the royal court (Trinity Lodge). The king, then fifty-nine years of age, was disabled with gout; but the prince, the French ambassadors, and others, were regaled with the usual "academical performances." The third, or preceding visit, however (in 1623), was dwelt on at some length, and appears to have been an occasion of much gaiety.

This was while Herbert was orator ; and he is expressly spoken of as making "a short farewell Speech" to the king ; who thanked him among others, and desired a copy of an epigram he had made. The comedy acted on this occasion was "Loiola," by John Hackett, the future bishop. The same spectacular arrangement of scholars—"freshmen, sophmoors, and sophisters, all being in their capps"—was observed ; and at the king's departure they all, with the non-regents, regents, and others, "sayd with a loud voice : '*Vivat Rex! Vivat Rex!*'" as they had also done at his coming.[1]

If, however, the king did not often go to Cambridge, Walton may be right in saying that Herbert often went to the king ; and his "particular appointment to attend his Majesty at Royston" is within the possibilities. James, in fact, may be said to have held court there as well as at Newmarket ; and he doubtless found it easier for the University, or its representatives, to come to him than to face in person the "tediosity" of its Latin orations and other scholastic exercises. In March, 1616, the Cambridge scholars acted a play

[1] This visit of 1622-23 may have been the occasion mentioned by Walton of Bishop Andrewes being at Cambridge, as he speaks of him as Bishop of Winchester, which he did not become until 1618. He held the office until his death in 1626.

at Royston at his request and charges; and this may have been one of many such performances. Herbert's acquaintance with the king may have dated from his official acknowledgment of the *Basilicon Doron* in 1620; or even from his remarkable lecture on one of the royal speeches two years before. This has always been reckoned an instance of gross flattery on his part; but the story has rarely been told in full. Bishop Hackett, in his *Life of Williams*, giving an account of an oration delivered by King James in 1628 before both Houses of Parliament, records that "His Majesty Feasted them with a Speech, then which nothing could be apter to the subject, or more Elegant for the matter. All the helps of that Faculty were extreamly perfect in him, abounding in Wit by Nature, in Art by Education, in Wisdom by Experience. Mr. George Herbert being Prælector in the Rhetorique School in Cambridge *anno* 1618, pass'd by those fluent Orators that Domineered in the Pulpits of Athens and Rome, and insisted to Read upon an Oration of King James, which he analysed, shewed the concinnity of the Parts, the propriety of the Phrase, the height and power of it to move the Affections, the Style utterly unknown to the Ancients, who could not conceive what Kingly eloquence was, in respect of which those noted Demagogi were

but Hirelings and Triobulary Rhetoricians. *The Speech which was then had at the Opening of this Parliament, doth commend Mr. Herbert for his Censure.*" The last sentence, which is commonly omitted from the quotation, shows plainly what the excellent though not unbiassed bishop thought of the royal genius ; but if the king had ever heard of the young lecturer's effusion, he was doubtless predisposed in his favour.

If no record exists of Herbert's meeting with the king, Lord Bacon, and Bishop Andrewes together at Cambridge, there is abundant evidence of his friendship with the two last named. Bacon had not only been a member of his college, but he also became high steward of the town in 1617, and took an active part in its affairs ; in regard to which the orator, it will be remembered, had written him a complimentary Latin letter, in addition to his acknowledgment of the *Instauratio.* Andrewes, besides his connection with the University through his old fellowship and mastership at Pembroke Hall, was Bishop of Ely from 1609 to 1618 ; and his affection for the whilom Westminster scholar may have begun at this time. Herbert's Court career, however, takes us far beyond academic boundaries, and opens a wide field of speculation as to his mode of life and ultimate aims. It seems clear that the oratorship did

not long satisfy his ambition; but if he saw larger possibilities in the courtly world, there is not the slightest reason to suppose he was attracted by the Bacchanalian revels described by Harington and other contemporary writers. That he may have witnessed them is likely enough; the second sin he condemns in *The Church Porch* is drunkenness; but his place by right would have been at the king's table, with the men of culture and accomplishment who took part in his "genial and convivial conferences," and were indubiously designed for honourable posts. If for the "Court" we read the "Government" we shall better understand the nature of his ambitions. Show, artifice, fashionable dress and modes of speech, together with much venality and moral corruption, might characterise the Court; but nevertheless it stood for the Government of the day, and whoever desired the office of a bishop, a judge, or a foreign diplomatist, or wished to serve his country in any other high capacity, must frequent its circles. Walton leaves us no doubt as to the poet's aspirations in this respect:—

"At this time of his being Orator," he says, "he had learnt to understand the Italian, Spanish, and French tongues very perfectly: hoping that, as his predecessors, so he might in time attain the place of Secretary of State, he being at that time

very high in the King's favour, and not meanly valued and loved by the most eminent and most powerful of the Court nobility. This and the love of a Court conversation, mixed with a laudable ambition to be something more than he then was, drew him often from Cambridge to attend the King wheresoever the Court was, who then gave him a sinecure, which fell to his Majesty's disposal, I think by the death of the Bishop of St. Asaph.[1] It was the same that Queen Elizabeth had formerly given to her favourite Sir Philip Sidney, and valued to be worth a hundred and twenty pounds per annum. With this and his annuity, and the advantage of his College and of his Oratorship, he enjoyed his genteel humour for clothes and Court-like company, and seldom looked toward Cambridge unless the King were there, but then he never failed ; and at other times left the manage of his Orator's place to his learned friend, Mr. Herbert Thorndike, who is now prebendary of Westminster."

All this is strictly in keeping with what we know of Herbert's character, and the genius of his family for public employments, especially for positions requiring facility in languages. There was every reason why he should feel himself justified in

[1] The rectorship of Whitford, or Whyteford, Flintshire (Grosart, i., xlix. *seq.*).

following in the footsteps of his brothers, most of whom were already engaged in the service of the State. Edward, the eldest, who had been knighted by James on his accession, was constantly abroad on important embassies, and in familiar correspondence with the king. Richard and William, the two soldiers, were gaining reputation as well as honourable wounds in the Low Countries and elsewhere. His next younger brother, Henry, who was destined to become master of the revels, had already been sworn in as the king's "servant"; and Thomas, the youngest, as soldier and seaman, had distinguished himself in several public capacities, among them that of commander of the ship in which Prince Charles returned from Spain. If, as it seems evident, George had definitely abandoned his purpose of taking orders in the Church and entering "into a benefice," he had doubtless convinced himself that, like his oratorship, the high public office he sought had no such "earthiness" that it might not "be joined with Heaven." Of course he may have been self-deceived. For another man—one of his brothers, for instance—the desire for an exalted and responsible civil post might have been right; but for one of his peculiar spiritual history it may have been wrong. We can moralise the theme endlessly, and prove to our own satis-

faction that he was disobedient to the heavenly vision, and his later travail of soul justly merited by his refusal of a higher for a lower calling. But the path that, with our perspective, seems clearly marked, to him was doubtless otherwise. In any case, to miss the right road, and fall into all manner of entanglements and perplexities in consequence, is, as all allegorists know, the common discipline of a saint ; and but for the beguilement of the Court we should not have had the George Herbert of *The Temple* and *The Country Parson*—the master of human as well as Divine wisdom. Walton makes it plain that the lines of his destiny were not easily resolved, and for more causes than one. Among them his health seems always to have been a factor to be reckoned on in his scheme of life :—

"I may not omit to tell that he had often designed to leave the University," says his biographer, "and decline all study, which he thought did impair his health ; for he had a body apt to a consumption, and to fevers and other infirmities, which he judged were increased by his studies ; for he would often say, 'He had too thoughtful a wit ; a wit like a penknife in too narrow a sheath, too sharp for his body.' But his mother would by no means allow him to leave the University or to travel ; and though he inclined very much to both,

yet he would by no means satisfy his own desires at so dear a rate as to prove an undutiful son to so affectionate a mother; but did always submit to her wisdom."

Here Walton quotes the latter half of one of his poems entitled "Affliction," which, he says, "appears to be a pious reflection on God's providence, and some passages of his life." The poem is perhaps the best, as it is the longest, of the five so named, and undoubtedly seems a record of personal experience. The opening stanzas are full of the joy of newly awakened spiritual life, as they are also of that curious blending of the homely with the fine which marks all his English writings :—

When first Thou didst entice to Thee my heart,
I thought the service brave;
So many joys I writ down for my part,
Besides what I might have
Out of my stock of natural delights,
Augmented by thy gracious benefits.[1]

I lookèd on Thy furniture so fine,
And made it fine to me;
Thy glorious household stuff did me entwine,
And 'tice me unto Thee.
Such stars I counted mine: both heaven and earth
Paid me my wages in a world of mirth.

But as the years passed on, clouds began to gather :—

[1] "Augmented with thy Grace's perquisites" (Grosart).

At first Thou gave me milk and sweetnesses ;
I had my wish and way :
My days were strewed with flowers and happiness :[1]
There was no month but May.
But with my years sorrow didst twist and grow,
And made a party unawares for woe.

My flesh begun unto my soul in pain,
Sicknesses cleave my bones,
Consuming agues dwell in every vein,
And tune my breath to groans.
Sorrow was all my soul : I scarce believed,
Till grief did tell me roundly that I lived.

Walton begins his quotation at the seventh of the eleven stanzas of the poem :—

Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town :
Thou didst betray me to a ling'ring book,
And wrap me in a gown.
I was entangled in a world of strife,[2]
Before I had the power to change my life.

It does not seem necessary to give the four remaining stanzas. The imprisoned scholar "threatened oft to raise the siege ;" but was from time to time partly reconciled to his lot by "academic praise ;" he "could not go away, nor persevere ;" and, dreading stagnation and unfruitfulness, desired to be a tree, "for then sure I should grow." Like Bunyan's pilgrim, he appears in his celestial journey to have met with all manner of hurts and

[1] happ'nesses. [2] "the world of strife" (Grosart).

hindrances; but the last stanza of his *Miserere* has the true Herbert ring:—

> Yet, though Thou troublest me, I must be meek,
> In weakness must be stout,
> Well, I will change my service, and go seek
> Some other master out.
> Ah my dear God, though I am clean forgot,
> Let me not love Thee, if I love Thee not.

It must be owned that Herbert's life as a courtier is involved in some obscurity. How long did it continue, and how was it spent? The date of his first official meeting with King James is unknown to us; it could not have been before his election to the oratorship in 1619, nor, it is superfluous to say, after the king's death in 1625. Six years, therefore, or from the age of twenty-six to thirty-two, was the longest space during which he could have basked in the sunshine of royal favour. For some time, at least, his orator's duties, with those belonging to his Fellowship and his lectureship in the Rhetoric School (in one of his letters—to Bishop Andrewes—he speaks of the last as an appointment held for a year only), must have kept him more or less at Cambridge; and when he began, whether from ill-health or the increasing demands made upon him by his Court engagements, to absent himself from the University, it is not clear where he lived or what was the nature of his occupations. There is no record of his

becoming, like his brother Henry, a sworn servant of the king, or of his holding any definite post at the Court ; but however his time was spent it was certainly not wasted. The acquirement of Italian, Spanish, and French, which Walton says he had learned while orator, must have taken him several years, despite his fluency in language, and, with his failing health, may have involved much pain and labour. In view of his bodily ailments, even his "laudable ambition" to obtain high office in the State must at times have flagged ; and we cannot wonder that he "often designed to leave the University, and decline all study." His complaint that his "wit was too sharp for his body" suggests a mental and physical organisation more common in our own neurotic age than in his ; and we cannot avoid regret that his over-strict mother refused to allow him to leave his college and travel, although "he inclined very much to both." To be deprived of the sweets of travel in foreign lands, which his younger as well as his elder brothers had long enjoyed, must have been a sore trial to the accomplished and appreciative scholar ; and it argues a high sense of filial duty on his part that he did not rebel at the maternal mandate.

The shattering of his dreams of State employment came with what must have been to him a startling suddenness. In that age of favouritism

and personal influence, the good offices of friends at Court were indispensable to advancement, and their loss meant disaster. George Herbert was deprived of his three most powerful patrons almost at a blow. Lodowick Duke of Richmond and James Marquis of Hamilton, whom Walton describes as "two of his most obliging and most powerful friends," died respectively in 1623 and 1625; the death of King James himself following a few days after that of the marquis. With them died also the poet's hope of a public career. He retired to private life in the country, and to a solitude deemed by his contemporaries even more injurious to his health than his studies had been.

CHAPTER VII

THE LADY MAGDALEN HERBERT

AFTER remaining twelve years a widow Mrs. Herbert—"The Lady Magdalen Herbert," as Donne calls her in the superscription of one of his poems—"married happily to a noble gentleman, the brother and heir of the Lord Danvers, Earl of Danby, who did highly value both her person and the most excellent endowments of her mind." The noble suitor who, in the first year of George Herbert's residence at Cambridge (1608), induced his mother to exchange her name for his own, and accept by right the title she had often enjoyed by courtesy, was Sir John Danvers of Danvers House, Chelsea, younger brother of the Henry Danvers created Earl of Danby by Charles the First in 1626. At the time of his marriage he was little more than twenty years old, and his wife more than twice his age. As a young man, by the account of his relative, the gossiping Aubrey, he "travelled France and Italy and made good

observations. He had in a fair body an harmonicall mind. In youth his complexion was so exceeding beautiful and fine, that . . . the people would come after him in the street to admire him. He had a very fine fancy, which lay chiefly for gardens and architecture." According to Dr. Donne, who was often helped in his pecuniary difficulties by the generous pair, his birth, youth, and interest at Court, with his heirship to large possessions, "might justly have promised him acceptance in what family soever, or upon what person soever he had directed and placed his affections." Therefore it is another proof of Mrs. Herbert's charms of person and intellect that he should have preferred her to a younger and less encumbered spouse.

Sir John proved a devoted husband, as he was also a kind if not indulgent friend and guardian of the younger members of the Herbert flock. The letters to him already quoted, from the youthful Trinity scholar in regard to his theological studies, show the cordiality of their relations, however formal the mode of expression may now seem. As Lady Danvers—to give her new title—did not die until 1627, this relationship probably continued for nearly twenty years, or until all the younger Herberts had grown to manhood and womanhood. An important result of the marriage

was the removal of their mother's home, and perhaps of theirs also, to the beautiful mansion at Chelsea called Danvers House, which the "harmonicall mind" of its owner had caused to be furnished with curious elegance, while its fine gardens were laid out in the Italian style. "'Twas Sir John Danvers who first taught us the way of Italian gardens," says Aubrey; and the noble country-house, for such it then was, adjoining the old home of Sir Thomas More, must have been a delightful abode; as well as a centre of culture, and the meeting-place of many of the most eminent scholars and personages of the day. The later career of its master, whether determined by the symmetry of his mental organism or by other causes, seems grievously out of keeping with this environment. Knighted by King James and made a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, he became associated with the famous Virginia Company, and, not without reason, soon rebelled against the claims and interference of royalty. He was twice married after the death of his first wife; and engaged in further Italian gardening to his financial hurt. When over fifty he entered Parliament and received a colonel's command in the Roundhead army; later on he was appointed to the commission by which King Charles was tried in 1649, and capped the climax of his social and political

revolt by signing the king's death warrant. That the step-father of George Herbert should have achieved the fame, or the infamy, of becoming a regicide is a seriously incongruous fact; and it speaks volumes for Walton's artistic sense that, although probably knowing the truth, he did not allow so lurid a patch of colour to disfigure his canvas.

The Herberts had changed their home several times. From Montgomery they had removed to Oxford; and at a later date, perhaps in 1601 or 1602, they took up their abode in the metropolis. "When I had attained the age betwixt eighteen or nineteen years," says Edward Herbert, "my mother, together with myself and wife, removed up to London, where we took house, and kept a greater family than became either my mother's widow's estate, or such young beginners as we were." It is probable that they remained in this expensive residence, wherever it was, until George had finished his studies at Westminster School; and as Mrs. Herbert's second marriage took place in 1608, the year of his election to the Trinity Scholarship, they may have removed to Danvers House at that time. Wherever they were we may be sure that the old Herbert hospitality was maintained; and to their friendly doors came no greater guest—or so they and others doubtless

believed—than the brilliant and fascinating John Donne, traveller and adventurer, linguist, poet, and preacher, and latterly Dean of St. Paul's. To attempt any just characterisation of this seventeenth century Browning—a Browning, no doubt, with many differences—would be here out of place. As dean of the cathedral church of the metropolis, the king's favourite doctor in divinity, and the most popular preacher of his day, as well as the admiration, and perhaps envy, of contemporary scholars and wits, his strange personality requires separate and individual treatment. Like the Herberts, he was partly of Welsh extraction: he belonged to a family who adhered to what the milder Protestants of the time called "the Old Religion," but became an Anglican, after a serious survey of "the body of Divinity as it was then controverted betwixt the Reformed and the Roman Church." He studied both at Oxford and Cambridge, but being then a Romanist took no degrees. Coming into his paternal inheritance, he travelled in Spain and Italy, and is believed, from his early poems and other more or less credible evidences, to have adopted for a time the morals of an Italianate Englishman of the age. If he did so he repented in a thousand sacred stanzas and a galaxy of magnificent sermons written in his heart's blood. Clandestinely married to the daughter of

Sir George Moore, Lieutenant of the Tower, he was cast into prison, but released and subsequently pardoned. In 1615, at the age of forty-two, he was induced to take orders in the English Church ; he became the king's chaplain in the same year and Dean of St. Paul's in 1621 ; holding that coveted appointment with ever-increasing reputation until his death ten years later. To Izaak Walton, his churchwarden at St. Dunstan's in the West—the living of which he also held—he seemed little less than a seraph : St. Austin and St. Ambrose in one, a Chrysostom reincarnated and preaching with divine unction, "his own heart . . . possessed with those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others ; a preacher in earnest ; weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them ; always preaching to himself, like an Angel from a cloud, but in none : carrying some, as St. Paul was, to Heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives." Walton, indeed, in his memorial verses on the dean's death, calls himself "his convert ;" and his first essay in biography—for his *Life* of Donne led the immortal series—grew out of affection for his admired pastor and friend.

There is something peculiarly attractive in the relations of the Herberts to this dazzling Eliza-

bethan, with his captivating manners, inspired talk, and power of throwing off divine and other verses of marvellous workmanship. To Walton, the attachment between Mrs. Herbert and her frequent guest and counsellor, appealed strongly. "It was not an amity," he says, "that polluted their souls, but an amity made up of a chain of suitable incinations and virtues; an amity like that of St. Chrysostom's to his dear and virtuous Olimpias; whom, in his letters, he calls his Saint: or an amity, indeed, more like that of St. Hierome to his Paula; whose affection to her was such that he turned poet in his old age, and then made her epitaph; wishing all his body were turned into tongues, that he might declare her just praises to posterity." Their real friendship probably began in 1607, when Mrs. Herbert was living in London, and the poverty-stricken poet, with his ailing family, was at Mitcham, a place in the country near Camberwell—his "hospital at Mitcham," as he calls it in one of his more distressful epistles. It was at this time he wrote, with his wife and seven children down with various diseases, "that if God should ease us with burials, I know not how to perform even that," and the virtuous lady "proved one of his most bountiful benefactors, and he as grateful an acknowledger of it," repaying her with the only currency then at his command,

letters and verses of compliment. Several of the letters were preserved by Walton, the best known being that which accompanied a number of his sacred poems, only one of which, however, can now be identified as belonging to this time. Both the letter and the poem in question are thus given by his biographer :—

" Madam,—Your favours to me are everywhere : I use them, and have them. I enjoy them at London, and leave them there ; and yet find them at Mitcham. Such riddles as these become things inexpressible ; and such is your goodness. I was almost sorry to find your servant here this day, because I was loath to have any witness of my not coming home last night, and indeed of my coming this morning. But my not coming was excusable, because earnest business detained me ; and my coming this day is by the example of your St. Mary Magdalen, who rose early upon Sunday to seek that which she loved most ; and so did I. And from her and myself, I return such thanks as are due to one to whom we owe all the good opinion that they, whom we need most, have of us. By this messenger, and on this good day, I commit the inclosed holy Hymns and Sonnets—which for the matter, not the workmanship, have yet escaped the fire—to your judgment, and to your protection too, if you think them worthy of

it; and I have appointed to this inclosed Sonnet to usher them to your happy hand.

"Your unworthiest servant,

"Unless your accepting him to be so

"have mended him,

"Jo. Donne.

"Mitcham, *July* 11, 1607."

To the Lady Magdalen Herbert:
Of St. Mary Magdalen.

Her of your name, whose fair inheritance
Bethina was, and jointure Magdalo,
An active faith so highly did advance,
That she once knew more than the Church did know,
The Resurrection; so much good there is
Delivered of her, that some Fathers be
Loth to believe one woman could do this;
But think these Magdalens were two or three.
Increase their number, Lady, and their fame;
To their devotion, add your innocence;
Take much of th' example, as of the name,
The latter half; and in some recompense
That they did harbour Christ Himself a guest,
Harbour these Hymns, to His dear name addrest.

J. D.

The enclosing letter seems to be wrongly dated as to day and month, though the year is doubtless correct. It was preceded by two or three others, which are of interest as specimens of the direct and elaborate personal flattery of the time, addressed to worthy as well as to unworthy objects. The metaphysical poet, however, ex-

plains that "nothing is flattery which the speaker believes; and of the grossest flattery there is this good use, that they tell us what we should be" —assuredly a plausible excuse for the practice of himself and his contemporaries. The "Autumnal Beauty," happier in its opening than in its later lines, he addressed to the lady in her declining years:—

> No spring nor summer beauty hath such grace
> As I have seen in one autumnal face . . .
> If 'twere a shame to love, here 'twere no shame;
> Affections here take Reverence's name,
> Were her first years the Golden Age? That's true;
> But now they're gold oft tried, and ever new.

Charming, however, as the picture is, it may be questioned if the benignant dame entirely relished the poet's treatment of her time-marked if still beautiful features:—

> Call not these wrinkles, graves; if graves they were,
> They were Love's graves, for else he is nowhere.
> Yet lies not Love dead here, but here doth sit,
> Vow'd to this trench, like an anchorit.
> And here, till hers, which must be his death, come,
> He doth not dig a grave, but build a tomb.

Going on, he suggests that his benefactress has grown plump as well as wrinkled; but further quotation is needless. These and other tributes only prove the attractiveness of Magdalen Herbert—for by that name she is best remembered—at all

periods of her life, as her hospitality continued to the end. In the plague of 1625, when 40,000 persons are said to have died in London, and his own parish of St. Dunstan's in the West suffered severely, the dean spent several months at her husband's house in Chelsea. He is also thought to have visited her at Montgomery Castle, then—after transference by King James to another member of the family—re-purchased by her son, Sir Edward. Happily when dean he was able to repay, by financial assistance to her husband, Sir John Danvers, the aid she had rendered him in his former poverty ; and at her death, in 1627, he preached, with the emotional power that ever distinguished him, her funeral sermon, "in the Parish Church of Chelsey near London," where, as Walton says, with his gentle pathos, "she now rests in her quiet grave." His own somewhat dramatic exodus from the world took place four years after.

A far truer testimony to her worth, and incidentally to the character of its writer, is the long missive from her son George, sent to her by the hands of the benevolent London goldsmith, Arthur Woodnot, in the severe illness that preceded her last. It is dated, as will be seen, in 1622, and is of importance as showing that the "fashionable humanist" was not so completely absorbed by

secular ambitions as some writers suppose. At the time of its composition he had been orator of his University for over two years, and had already penned his much criticised letters of compliment to the king and the Marquis of Buckingham.

A Letter of Mr. George Herbert to his Mother in her Sickness.

"MADAM,—At my last parting from you, I was better content, because I was in hope I should myself carry all sickness out of your family; but since I know I did not, and that your share continues, or rather increaseth, I wish earnestly that I were again with you; and would quickly make good my wish, but that my employment does fix me here, being now but a month to our Commencement; wherein my absence, by how much it naturally augmenteth suspicion, by so much shall it make my prayers the more constant and the more earnest for you to the God of all consolation. —In the meantime I beseech you to be cheerful, and comfort yourself in the God of all comfort, Who is not willing to behold any sorrow but for sin. What hath affliction grievous in it more than for a moment? or why should our afflictions here have so much power or boldness as to oppose the hope of our joys hereafter? Madam, as the earth is but a point in respect of the heavens, so are earthly

troubles compared to heavenly joys; therefore, if either age or sickness lead you to those joys, consider what advantage you have over youth and health, who are now so near those true comforts. Your last letter gave me an earthly preferment, and I hope kept heavenly for yourself; but would you divide and choose too? Our College customs allow not that; and I should account myself most happy, if I might change with you; for I have always observed the thread of life to be like other threads or skeins of silk, full of snarles and encumbrances. Happy is he whose bottom is wound up, and laid ready for work in the New Jerusalem. —For myself, dear Mother, I always feared sickness more than death, because sickness hath made me unable to perform those offices for which I came into the world, and must yet be kept in it; but you are freed from that fear, who have already abundantly discharged that part, having both ordered your family, and so brought up your children, that they have attained to the years of discretion and competent maintenance. So that now, if they do not well, the fault cannot be charged on you, whose example and care of them will justify you both to the world and your own conscience; insomuch that, whether you turn your thoughts on the life past, or on the joys that are to come, you have strong preservatives against all

disquiet. And for temporal afflictions, I beseech you consider, all that can happen to you are either afflictions of estate, or body, or mind. For those of estate, of what poor regard ought they to be? since, if we had riches, we are commanded to give them away; so that the best use of them is, having, not to have them. But perhaps, being above the common people, our credit and estimation calls on us to live in a more splendid fashion; but, O God! how easily is that answered, when we consider that the blessings in the Holy Scripture are never given to the rich, but to the poor. I never find 'Blessed be the rich,' or 'Blessed be the noble'; but, 'Blessed be the meek,' and 'Blessed be the poor,' and 'Blessed be the mourners, for they shall be comforted.' And yet, O God! most carry themselves so, as if they not only not desired, but even feared to be blessed.—And for afflictions of the body, dear Madam, remember the holy Martyrs of God, how they have been burned by thousands, and have endured such other tortures as the very mention of them might beget amazement; but their fiery trials have had an end; and yours (which, praised be God, are less) are not like to continue long. I beseech you, let such thoughts as these moderate your present fear and sorrow; and know that if any of yours should prove a Goliah-like trouble, yet you may

say with David, That God, who hath delivered me out of the paws of the lion and bear, will also deliver me out of the hands of this uncircumcised Philistine.— Lastly, for those afflictions of the soul ; consider that, God intends that to be as a sacred temple for Himself to dwell in, and will not allow any room there for such an inmate as grief ; or allow that any sadness shall be His competitor. And above all, if any care of future things molest you, remember those admirable words of the Psalmist : 'Cast thy care on the Lord, and He shall nourish thee' (Psalm lv. 22). To which join that of St. Peter : 'Casting all your care on the Lord, for He careth for you' (1 Pet. v. 7). What an admirable thing is this, that God puts His shoulder to our burden, and entertains our care for us, that we may the more quietly intend His service!—To conclude, let me commend only one place more to you : Philipp. iv. 4, St. Paul saith there : 'Rejoice in the Lord always ; and again I say, rejoice.' He doubles it to take away the scruple of those that might say : 'What, shall we rejoice in afflictions?' Yes, I say again, rejoice ; so that it is not left to us to rejoice, or not rejoice ; but whatsoever befalls us, we must always, at all times, rejoice in the Lord, Who taketh care for us. And it follows in the next verse : 'Let your moderation appear to all men : the Lord is

at hand : be careful for nothing.' What can be said more comfortably ? Trouble not yourselves ; God is at hand to deliver us from all or in all. Dear Madam, pardon my boldness, and accept the good meaning of

" Your most obedient son,

" George Herbert.

" Trinity College, *May 25th*,[1] 1622."

To some it may appear that the would-be comforter strikes a note of too great assurance in dealing with his mother's affliction ; but it cannot be said that he was without an abundant experience himself of bodily suffering. The occasional quaintness, and blending of deference with affection, are characteristic of all Herbert's family letters, or at least of those to the older members of the household. Indeed, its apologetic tone, despite the pulpit note of its closing exhortations, suggests that Mrs. Herbert had kept her fifth son as well as her first in a " moderate awe " of herself, though obviously without impairing his regard. In any case, it is always a relief to find George Herbert speaking in his natural voice, which, notwithstanding its filial piety and literary merits, cannot certainly be said of his *Parentalia*. This is the collection of nineteen longer or shorter poems in

[1] 29th (Grosart).

Latin and Greek, devoted to the memory and virtues of his mother, and first published at the end of her funeral sermon, preached by Dr. Donne shortly after her death. It is a common defect of classical compositions dealing with English subjects that they enshrine them in an alien atmosphere; and here the loyal son at once transforms his admirable British mother into a Roman matron, with the devotional habits of an Early Christian saint. Perhaps, with the literary media he chose and his intellectual life-training, this was unavoidable; but through the haze of classical artifice we may get glimpses of the true Magdalen Herbert in her house with her children and her maids—Ann, Bet, and Joan, as the latter may have been called in the vernacular. Both the Latin and the Greek divisions of the *Parentalia* have been Englished in Dr. Grosart's exhaustive edition of Herbert's writings, and the following is from the translation of the first of the series by his poetical collaborator, the Rev. Richard Wilton. After invoking the tears of "Holy Cornelias and Sempronias grave," the filial elegist goes on :—

> The glory of women has perish'd: and men dread
> Lest of each sex with her the dower has fled.
> The fleeting suns she would not wear away
> In vanity of dress and self display,
> Piling proud structures in the morning hour
> Upon her head, rear'd upwards like a tower;

Then spending the long day in talk and laughter—
For tongues' confusion comes tower'd Babel after!—
But after modest braiding of her hair,
Such as becomes a matron wise and fair,
And a brief bath, her freshen'd mind she brought
To pious duties and heart-healing thought,
Addressing to the Almighty Father's throne
Such warm and earnest prayers as He will own.
Next she goes round her family, assigning
What each may need for garden, distaff, dining.
To everything its time and place are given;
Then are call'd in the tasks at early even.
By a fixed plan her life and house go on,
By a wise daily calculation;
Sweetness and grace through all her dwelling shine,
Of both first shining in her mind the sign.
But if at times a great occasion rise—
With visit of some noble—she likewise
Rises, and raises up herself, and vies
With the occasion, and the victory gains.
O, what a shower of courteous speech she rains!
Grave pleasantry, grace mix'd with wit is heard;
Fetters and chains she weaves with every word.
Or if some business for the hour should ask,
She glides through turns and windings of the task,
With her replies a match for wisest men.
Then what a mistress was she of the pen!
What graceful writing hers! Mark the fair shell,
Wherein a kernel fairer still may dwell,
The voice and sentiment agreeing well.

. . . . . .

Add music, smoothing, soothing other gifts,
Which, for a moment, the rapt spirit lifts,
As with a prelude of heaven's harmony.
Then what a helper of the poor you see
In her! A prop of languid folk and slow,
A roof for those who live forlorn and low,

A common balm on throbbing bosoms shed,
While public blessings hover round her head.
. . . . . .
But thou who thinkest these things not fitly done,
A mother's praise forbidding to a son,
Away with thy false, foolish modesty!
Heartless and silent then shall only I
Be found, when her fine praise rings to the sky?
My mother's urn, is't closed only to me—
Wither'd the herbs, and dry the rosemary?
Owe I to her a tongue only to grieve?
Away, thou foolish one and give me leave
Shame to forget while pious praise I weave.
Thou shalt be prais'd for ever, mother mine,
By me, thy sorrowing son; for surely thine
This learning is, which I deriv'd from thee,
Which o'er the page now flows spontaneously,
Its highest fruit of labour seen to attain
In praising thee, though Folly may arraign.

So much seems the rightful due of the noble and gifted mother of the Herberts, the "Worthiest Lady," as Donne addresses her in his letters—surely one of the most attractive figures that have ever brightened the pages of history or biography. It is pleasant to know, from her son's eulogium, that she did not indulge in the vanity of dress, nor tire her head in the preposterous manner of the age, and that, like her modern successors, she made use of a brief bath before entering on the day's duties. It is interesting, also, to have the well-ordering of her house, and her wit, vivacity, and letter-writing powers confirmed by one so inti-

mately acquainted with them; and if she is finally consigned to a Roman urn instead of an English churchyard, we recognise the poet's necessity of maintaining his atmosphere. But in spite of the dean's ecstatic fervours, and her son's affectionate painting, Walton remains the better artist, and the pictures he has drawn of the devoted wife and mother will probably live longer and more vividly in our memories.

CHAPTER VIII

FRIENDS AND CONTEMPORARIES

KING JAMES died on the 27th of March, 1625. However great the shock may have been to his academic protege, coming so soon after the deaths of his two other most influential friends, we cannot help feeling glad for his sake and our own that his hopes of courtly preferment were destroyed. It is impossible to think of George Herbert as a Minister of State, taking part against his better judgment in the political and social intrigues of the time ; or, like his friend, Sir Henry Wotton, committed to the chartered mendacities of foreign diplomacy. In his long letter of consolation to his mother it will be remembered that he once speaks of himself as a person with a mission in life : " I always feared sickness more than death," he says, " because sickness hath made me unable to perform those offices for which I came into the world, and must yet be kept in it." The language is almost identical with that used by Marcus Aurelius in regard to his round of imperial

duties; but we feel instinctively that George Herbert's calling and election were to other things than high civil posts. Walton himself had no doubt on the subject. His hero had been divinely trained and educated, and his soul kept in a frame of peculiar holiness, "that he may, and ought to be a pattern of virtue to all posterity, and especially to his brethren of the Clergy." With this conviction he thus tells the story of his great disappointment:—

"In this time of Mr. Herbert's attendance and expectation of some good occasion to remove from Cambridge to Court, God, in whom there is an unseen chain of causes, did in a short time put an end to the lives of two of his most obliging and most powerful friends, Lodowick Duke of Richmond, and James Marquis of Hamilton; and not long after him King James died also, and with them all Mr. Herbert's Court hopes; so that he presently betook himself to a retreat from London, to a friend in Kent, where he lived very privately, and was such a lover of solitariness as was judged to impair his health more than his study had done. In this time of retirement, he had many conflicts with himself, whether he should return to the painted pleasures of a Court life or betake himself to a study of Divinity, and enter into Sacred Orders, to which his dear mother had

often persuaded him. These were such conflicts as they only can know that have endured them; for ambitious desires, and the outward glory of this world, are not easily laid aside; but at last God inclined him to put on a resolution to serve at His altar."

It was unquestionably time that he should no longer halt between two opinions. With only Walton's story to guide us, and the reference in his seemingly autobiographical poem to his lack of power to change his state, it is at least possible that he could not make the decision until the death of his royal master. There is difficulty in believing that a person of his family and attainments should ever have been a mere hanger-on at Court; and in default of any evidence to the contrary the surmise is allowable that he had duties there of some kind, official or otherwise, and that the now feeble monarch had made him promises of others. Speculation on this head, however, is useless; and Walton is explicit in saying that the poet's hopes died with the king. His retirement to his friend's country-house appears to have taken place almost at once; for it is significant that the king's funeral oration at Cambridge was delivered by his deputy orator, Herbert Thorndyke. Possibly, as his bodily ailments seem to have increased with his years, ill-health may

have been one cause of his absence. At the date of the king's death he was thirty-two; and the feeling that, like Milton at a much earlier age, his late spring showed no bud or blossom worthy of his youthful promise, may have added to the poignancy of his sufferings. It is true that many persons of scholarly tastes and ambitions might have envied him. He was Fellow of a famous and influential College; he held an office in his University which was then as now the hall-mark of distinguished classical culture; and he had been the friend and companion of the king and of the most prominent personages of the day. But this was not the true fruition of his earlier aspirations—his resolve at seventeen to devote his poetical powers to religious ends, and his fervid assurances to his relatives at twenty-four that divinity was to be the main business of his life.

Walton, himself a loyal cherisher of friends, and indeed a lover of all men who did not attack and vilify his Mother Church, lays great stress on his hero's friendships. He is careful to give him a complete setting in this necessary item of environment; but from his saying that he was "not meanly valued and loved by the most eminent and most powerful of the Court nobility," we need not infer that he was ever deep in their counsels. It is plain that his intimacies admitted of degrees.

The two noble patrons whose deaths, with that of the king, shattered his worldly hopes, were doubtless acquaintances of the royal dining and conference table, who were attracted by his wit and personal charm. Both were of the king's Scottish following. Lodowick (or Ludovick) Stuart, second Duke of Lennox, after holding high offices in Scotland, accompanied James into England, and received a large part of Lord Cobham's estates on his attainder. He filled several posts of importance after his naturalisation in the southern realm, among them that of ambassador to France, and was created Earl of Newcastle and Duke of Richmond in 1623, but died soon after, at about the age of fifty, and was interred with all magnificence in Westminster Abbey. James Hamilton, second Marquis of Hamilton and Earl of Arran, was much younger, being only four years older than Herbert himself. Like the duke, he had held public positions in both countries, his English honours including the offices of privy councillor, gentleman of the bedchamber, and others. An English peerage was given to him in 1619; and he was one of the commissioners for the treaty with Spain for the proposed marriage of Prince Charles with the Infanta, but was carried off by a malignant fever in 1625, the king

exclaiming at the news of his death: "If the branches be thus cut down, the stock cannot continue long!" These now shadowy figures may perhaps be taken as types of his merely political or Court friends, of his relations with whom nothing is known beyond Walton's brief statement.

Yet another may have been the spectacular Duke of Buckingham, the successor of the infamous Somerset in the affections of the king. The son of a Leicestershire knight, this last and most remarkable of the royal favourites made his appearance at Court in 1615, and ascended the ladder of rank, wealth and influence with a rapidity never before known. In 1616, at the age of twenty-four, he was knighted; and eight years afterwards, while at Madrid with the prince on the matter of the Spanish match, he was created Duke of Buckingham, and, in his complete ascendency over the infatuated monarch, was addressing him in his familiar letters as "Dear Dad," and subscribing himself "Thy servant and dog, Steenie." His arrogance, venality, and other notorious qualities, with the bad influence he exerted over the youthful prince, have evoked the strongest reprobation of historians; but recently milder judgments have prevailed; perhaps from their adoption of the theory of the imperial

stoic lately cited, that the wrongdoer acts from the compulsion of his nature and circumstances, and in a manner cannot help himself. By some writers, indeed, the duke is credited with something like statesmanship; and his refusal to wear a shirt of mail under his doublet, notwithstanding his fears of personal attack before his assassination, may be counted to him as courage. But whatever redeeming features he may have possessed, modesty of apparel was not one of them. He was, in fact, the most outrageously bedizened figure in the extravagant Court of his day, literally encrusted with jewels even on common occasions. "At any ordinary dancing" he was wont, it is said, "to have his clothes trimmed with great diamond buttons, and to have diamond hat-bands, cockades and ear-rings . . . yoked with great and manifold knots of pearl;" while at his going to Paris in 1625, to arrange the marriage between Charles and the Princess Henrietta Maria, "He had twenty-seven suits of clothes made, the richest that embroidery, lace, silk, velvet, gold and gems could contribute," one of them loaded with diamonds to the value of £14,000. His most familiar portrait, that by Miereveldt, shows a coarse and unprepossessing face; but earlier ones give a somewhat more pleasing impression, and suggest a weak rather than wicked character—if the terms

are not synonymous. In 1626, by command of King Charles, he was elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and during his short term of office, ended abruptly by his "bloody assassinate" in 1628, he conferred several benefits upon it and projected many more. Herbert's official letter of congratulation on his becoming marquis has been mentioned, and his conception of him as the great dispenser of the royal benevolence ("so thou dost diffuse the dignities derived from our most excellent King over the whole commonwealth; through thee our James shines upon us: thou dost display him to the people") shows the height of power he had already attained; but it is possible that no real friendship ever existed between him and his conventional adulator.

With Bacon, a far nobler though not less frail member of the courtly circle, the poet's relations were inevitably on a different and much higher plane. The "great secretary of nature and all learning" had been an undergraduate of Trinity in his early youth; but had left the University with no good opinion of its studies, and especially full of contempt for the all-dominant Aristotle. His rise through the different degrees of titular and other honours, from his appointment as Counsel Extraordinary to Queen Elizabeth in 1590, to his

final elevation, in 1619, to the Lord Chancellorship, as Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, had not equalled Buckingham's astounding progress; but at the time of his acquaintance with Herbert he held a sufficiently high place among the king's counsellors, while his rank in the world of intellect was supreme. As before noted, he had become high steward of the town of Cambridge in 1617, the year of Herbert's appointment as *sublector quartæ classis*; and a few years later the poet, as orator of his University, had written to him in his public capacity. Three of his letters in 1620 (namely, those acknowledging the *Instauratio*, expressing "thanks for the river," and desiring his aid against the London booksellers' monopoly of foreign works) have been preserved; the first being the most important and characteristic. In this certainly appreciative effusion, the orator welcomes the book in question, "not with our bosom alone . . . but with both our arms and with kisses;" while he compares its author to the discoverers of new lands, although to their disparagement ("they have relied on the magnetic needle; thou on the more penetrating sharpness of the intellect"). Yet more convincing than these official raptures are his three Latin poems on the same great work: one "To the Author of the *Instauratio Magna*, Francis Bacon;"

another "To the Honour of the most illustrious Francis, Baron Verulam," etc. . . . upon its publication; and a third instituting a comparison between the Lord Chancellor's office and his intellectual progeny. Another short Latin poem, written probably in 1626 or soon after, "On the Death of the Incomparable Francis, Viscount St. Albans, Baron Verulam," is thus translated in Dr. Grosart's large edition of Herbert's writings :—

> While thou dost groan 'neath weight of sickness slow,
> And wasting Life with doubtful step doth go,
> What wise Fates sought I see at last fulfill'd:
> Thou needs must die in April—so they will'd;
> That here the Flowers their tears might weep forlorn,
> And there the Nightingale melodious mourn,
> Such dirges only fitting for thy tongue,
> Wherein all eloquence most surely hung.

If the lines do not escape the charge of artificiality, neither does the *Parentalia*, written in commemoration of his own mother about a year afterwards; but there is no lack of evidence of the reciprocal admiration between the philosopher and the poet. Walton's statement, however, that Bacon placed so great a value on his friend's judgment that he usually desired his approval of his works before submitting them to the press, can hardly be accepted as applying to anything more than his religious poems, and perhaps only

to his translation of the Psalms, published in 1625, shortly before his death. The dedication, "To his very good friend, Mr. George Herbert," runs thus :—

"The pains that it pleased you to take about some of my writings I cannot forget, which did put me in mind to dedicate to you this poor exercise of my sickness. Besides, it being my manner for dedications to choose those that I hold most fit for the argument, I thought that in respect of divinity and poesy met, whereof the one is the matter, the other the style of this little writing, I could not make better choice ; so with signification of my love and acknowledgment, I ever rest,

"Your affectionate friend,

"Fr. St. Albans."

The quality of the philosopher's religious verse need not here concern us. There can be no doubt, however, that Herbert's mind was powerfully affected by that of Bacon ; whose works, in common with every scholar of his time, he cannot fail to have read, and who it may be saved him from falling too completely under the influence of Donne's brilliant but ill-balanced genius.

His friendship with Andrewes keeps us still

within the courtly group, though the gentle bishop may be said to have been in the Court rather than of it. The most learned English theologian of his time, a prelate of rare qualifications, and a preacher of such attractiveness that his admirers called him "the very *stella prædicantium*," and "an angel in the pulpit," he was one of the earliest of the Elizabethan advocates of the Divine origin of episcopacy, and among the first to incur the charge of "Arminianism" and of Papistical teaching and practices. His influence over the poet in things ecclesiastical could not have been otherwise than great, and it is probable that to him far more than to Laud he owed his conceptions of the priestly office and its duties and responsibilities. Just when and where their intimacy began is a matter of small moment. It is possible that Andrewes, while Dean of Westminster, may have formed a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Herbert, who was then living in London, and received her promising son as a boarder in the deanery during his first year as a "Town boy;" but it is far more probable that their actual intimacy began at Cambridge. It was there, Walton says, that they engaged in their modest debate on the vexed question of "Predestination and Sanctity of Life;" after which Herbert (somewhat presumptuously, it may appear to us, as he was

EFFIGIES R. P. LANCELOTI ANDREWES
EPISCOPI WINTONIENSIS
See heer a Shadow from that setting SUNNE,
Whose glorious course through this Horizon runn
Left the dimm face of our dull Hemisphere,
All one great Eye, all drownd in one great Teare.
Whose rare industrious Soule led his free thought
Through Learnings Universe, and vainly sought
Room for her spacious Selfe, untill at length
She found ye way home with an holy strength
Snatcht herself hence to Heavn; filld a bright place
Mids't those immortal Fires, and on the face
Of our Great MAKER, text a flaming eye:
Where still she reads true pure Divinitie.
And now ye graue Aspect hath drawn to shrink
Into this leane appearance. If you think
Tis but a dead face Art doth heer bequeath
Lack on the following leaues, see him breath.
Are to be sold by R. Badger dwelling in Stationers Hall. 1633
John Payne Fecit

BISHOP ANDREWES

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY JOHN PAYNE

nearly forty years his junior) sent the saintly bishop his prudential aphorisms in the Greek letter already mentioned, which its grateful recipient wore next to his heart till the day of his death. Never yet recovered, a Latin letter from the poet, written after his return from a visit to his aged friend at Winchester, has been preserved, and attests, in spite of its stilted phraseology, the warmth and sincerity of their attachment. It is also of interest as showing the pressure of Herbert's occupations; for he describes himself as "buried in academic affairs," and discharging two important functions among his fellow-collegians, those of "Professor of Rhetoric for this year, and of Orator for more years than one." Its reference to his intermissions of writing suggests that the letter is merely part of a considerable correspondence. Besides these letters, it may be remembered that Herbert addressed one of his "Epigrams in Defence of the Discipline of Our Church" (in the *Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria* controversy) to the Bishop of Winchester, by whom Andrewes was probably meant, though the date of the poem is uncertain.

These visits to his spiritual father, at Winchester (or Farnham) or at Ely, must have familiarised Herbert with the ornate and dignified services of the bishop's private chapels; as it is

improbable that so ardent a defender of Anglican rites would have absented himself at such times. Andrewes, it is well known, maintained in those comparatively private places of worship the ritual and adornments commonly stigmatised as Popish by the more militant Puritans of the day, although unlike Laud he did not force them on others. The description by Prynne, in his *Canterburie's Doom*, of the two candlesticks and tapers on the altar, the cushion for the service-book, the credence table, and the basin and ewer "for the polluted priests and prelates to wash in before consecration, and a towel to wipe their unhallowed fingers," together with the richly engraved chalice, and other "Romish furniture," doubtless helped to fan the flames which a generation later destroyed these and other relics of the "old religion." Many, however, who personally attended the services were much affected and elevated, some so greatly "that they desired to end their days in the Bishop of Ely's chapel." Herbert's own enumeration of the requisites of a country church is much less elaborate, perhaps from his view of its humbler place in the ecclesiastical system ; but his insistence on the decency and order of its material appointments at least suggests the influence of his friend.

He could not fail, again, despite the original

difference in their rank, to have been intimate with his old schoolfellow at Westminster and companion scholar at Trinity, John Hackett, the London tailor's son, who afterwards became Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. Also it is probable that he saw much of Bishop Williams, the witty and facile Lord Keeper, whose pregnant replies to the king's questions at table won him his civil and ecclesiastical advancement; but with Laud it is doubtful if he was ever well acquainted, although later on it was he who, according to Walton, prevailed upon him to accept the Bemerton living.

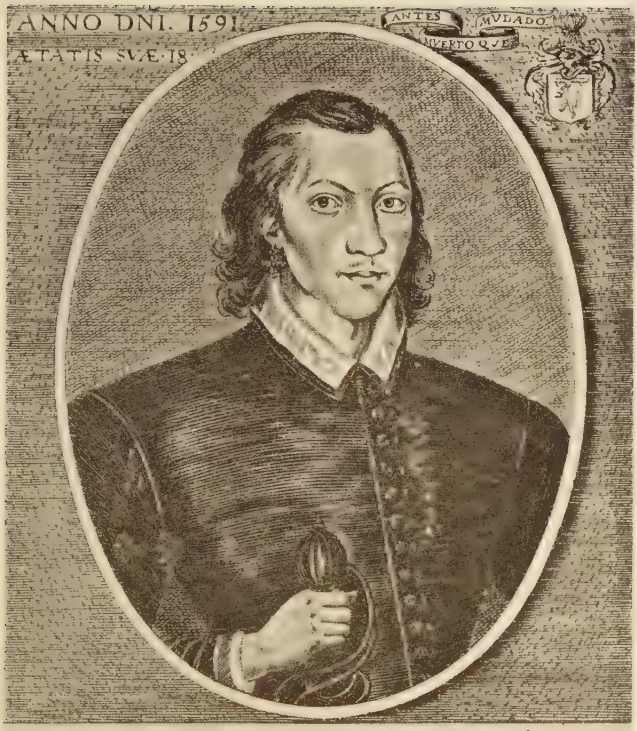
Both Donne and Wotton, with whom he enjoyed —to use Walton's generous adjectives—a "long and entire" friendship, were also of the Court, and eminent if perhaps not powerful. The dean, his elder by twenty years, had of course known him as a boy or at least a youth in the Herbert household; though he seems from his letters and other evidences to have been more intimate with his eldest brother, the future Lord Herbert of Cherbury; yet there is no reason to doubt Walton's word as to the duration and completeness of their regard. Donne refers at least once to George Herbert in his correspondence (in a letter written to Sir Henry Goodyer from Danvers House, where he stayed through the severe plague of

1625) as "being here" and conveying friendly messages; and shortly before his own death in 1631 he sent him one of his famous anchor-seals, which the poet acknowledged by the composition of verses in Latin and English. Walton's account of the matter, in his *Life* of Herbert, is as follows:—

"A little before his death he caused many seals to be made, and in them to be engraven the figure of Christ crucified on an anchor—the emblem of Hope—and of which Dr. Donne would often say, *Crux mihi anchora.* These seals he gave or sent to most of those friends on which he put a value; and at Mr. Herbert's death these verses were found wrapt up with that seal, which was by the doctor given to him:—

> When my dear friend could write no more,
> He gave this Seal, and so gave o'er.
> When winds and waves rose highest, I am sure,
> This Anchor keeps my faith, that me, secure."

In the *Life* of Donne himself, Walton quotes a poem sent by the doctor to Herbert with this memorial symbol, which he explains he has adopted in place of the sheaf of snakes he had formerly used, "which is the crest of my poor family." Here their common biographer describes their friendship as "long and dear," and "made up by such a sympathy of inclinations that



This was for youth, Strength, Mirth, and wit that Time
Most count their golden Age; but t'was not thine.
Thine was thy later yeares, so much refind
From youths Drosse, Mirth, & wit; as thy pure mind
Thought (like the Angels) nothing but the Praise
Of thy Creator, in those last, best Dayes.
Wimes this Booke, (thy Embleme) which begins
With Love; but endes, with Sighes, & Teares for sins.

Will: Marshall. Sculpsit. IZ: WA:

JOHN DONNE, AS A YOUTH

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY W. MARSHALL

they coveted and joyed to be in each other's company," their affection being "still maintained by many sacred endearments," of which the above verses and gift were one testimony. This may be held as sufficient proof of the warmth of their friendship in their mature years; but the question of the elder poet's influence upon the work of the younger is one of some difficulty.

Of his acquaintance with Sir Henry Wotton no other record seems to exist than Walton's brief statement in the Herbert *Life;* his earlier promise to contract himself forbidding him to expand the theme. Courtier, traveller, diplomatist, poet, and ultimately cleric and pedagogue, his figure is one of the most romantic of the age, as some of his poetry is certainly among the best. His *Life* was the second of the series undertaken by Walton; and the story of his brilliant career, beginning in 1568 at the seat of his ancestors, "Bocton Hall,[1] commonly called Bocton, or Boughton Place or Palace, in the Parish of Bocton Malherbe, in the fruitful country of Kent" (Walton loved precision in these matters at least), and

[1] The hall stands to-day on a high Kentish hill-top, looking towards the Channel at Hastings; "beautifying," as Walton says, "and being beautified by the Parish Church," near at hand. The mansion is now used as a farmhouse; but the west front and a handsome panelled room within, still show its ancient character as the home of the Wottons.

ending in his seventy-second year, at Eton College as its provost, is full of picturesque interest. Its "circumference," says his biographer, first touched at Winchester School, and then at Oxford, "and after upon . . . many remarkable parts and passages in Christendom;" but the versatile genius and man of the world will perhaps be chiefly remembered for his two fine poems, the courtly verses in praise of his royal mistress, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia (beginning "You meaner beauties of the night"), and those in which, in the strain of quietism noticeable in some of the most active spirits of his time, he sums up what he holds to be the elements of a desirable life :—

> How happy is he born and taught
> Who serveth not another's will;
> Whose armour is his honest thought
> And simple truth his utmost skill!

Yet another title to our remembrance is his witty but dangerous definition of a foreign ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country;" an apothegm which, at the time, touched the edge of truth so nearly as to involve its author in manifold embarrassments.

These are some of the courtly personages whom Walton, with his accustomed skill, has grouped about the subject of his memoir. They are interesting figures, from the theological king who

would be the best clerk in his dominions to the philosophical diplomatist who, amidst the splendours of foreign palaces, longed to entertain his days in the quiet companionship of books and friends. In comely ruffs, doublets, and long-hose, gravely gowned or resplendent in satin, lace, and jewels—the bishops in their much-abused four-square caps and lawn sleeves—they look out upon us from their portraits with human eyes, blue, grey, black, and brown as the case may be, for the most part seriously, as if aware of the magnitude of the issues in which they dealt. They are of their age, and express its faults as well as its virtues. The corrupt, undignified Court, about which they revolved more or less closely, did not leave even the purest of them unstained; and the instances of the sudden disgrace of high officials of State, the Lord Treasurer for public peculation, the Lord Keeper for bribe-taking, and the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Privy Seal for suspected connection with a murder, were merely capital cases among many of less note. The scandalous Essex divorce, with its tragic sequel, may be considered merely as a magnified example of the intrigues prevalent in the higher (or lower) social life of the day; and it drew saints as well as sinners into its coils. James himself (who certainly was no saint) might be

called the prime mover in the business. It was he who first brought about the marriage of the Countess, then Lady Frances Howard and only thirteen years old, with the young Earl of Essex, who was not more than a year her senior. It was he who, when that objectionable if ill-used young woman placed her affections on his Scottish favourite, Robert Carr, then Viscount Rochester, pressed with equal urgency for her divorce and re-marriage with his creature. And again, after the pair had been convicted of poisoning Sir Thomas Overbury, Carr's former friend and amanuensis, because of his opposition to the match, and his knowledge of facts which it would have been inconvenient to have divulged, it was the king who pardoned them both. Bacon, Donne, and even Bishop Andrewes, were among the many who played a regrettable part in the earlier stages of the affair ; the bishop, it must seem, in obedience to the fate which, as it has been said, compelled every great Churchman of his day to perform a base action at least once in his life. But the divinity that hedged the doings as well as the person of kings, and the glamour surrounding high personages, joined to their ignorance of the real truth of the case, may be reasonably urged in their excuse.

Of another order of men, Herbert's poetical and

dramatic coevals at Cambridge, his biographer has little or nothing to say. It is, however, difficult to connect him with contemporary names in literature other than those already mentioned. Some have suggested an acquaintance with Ben Jonson and even with Shakespeare; but while he may have known the former, his acquaintance with the latter is highly improbable. Unlike Milton, he has left no mention, still less praise, of the superlative dramatist in his writings; and it is very likely he would have considered him inferior to his classical rival, and both infinitely below Donne. Possibly he may have known his fellow-collegian, Giles Fletcher, author of the remarkable religious poem, "Christ's Death and Victory," who, like himself, came from Westminster School to Trinity as a scholar a few years before his own advent. Two other poets of greater or less renown were certainly his contemporaries at Cambridge. Francis Quarles, the well-known author of several collections of religious poems, among them the widely popular "Divine Emblems," was nearly of his own age, and a student at Christ's College during his undergraduateship; while the frolicsome Herrick, half Pagan and half Christian (some would altogether deny the Christian element in his composition), was absorbing Latin and Greek, and doubtless many things besides, at St. John's

College and later at Trinity Hall. Whether, however, the aristocratic Trinity scholar and Fellow knew either of them must be left to surmise. Spenser and Marlowe of course belonged to an earlier time; and Crashaw, his fellow-singer in things divine, came after. Milton, whom he resembled in several respects, although their destiny threw them far apart, was at Christ's College during the last years of his official connection with the University; but by 1625, the year of Milton's matriculation, Herbert, his senior by fifteen years, had almost ceased to reside at Cambridge; and as he vacated his Oratorship in 1627, and his Fellowship soon after, it is quite possible that they never met. It is needless to say that Henry Vaughan, his professed imitator, and in some things his equal if not superior as a poet, belonged to a later generation as well as to the sister University.

Turning from the poets, Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding fame, his friend and literary executor, is said by Walton to have been slightly known to him at Cambridge, where the precocious pietist became Fellow of his College (Clare Hall) at the age of eighteen, the year after Herbert's admission to Trinity. Another Fellow of Clare, his later eulogist, Barnabas Oley, was also his contemporary and possible friend; but of both more will have to be said at another place.

CHAPTER IX

THE REORDERING OF THE CHURCH

IN a former chapter an effort was made to sketch in brief the leading characteristics of the age in which George Herbert lived and worked out his fruitful destiny. In the present, some aspects of the upbuilding and conserving movement by which the Church of England—or the Anglican Church, if its larger title be preferred—was saved from disintegration, and handed down in something like organic unity to our own day, will be more especially considered ; as this seems desirable before carrying on the story of the poet's life to its later development and close.

In the background of any picture of the movements in religious or ecclesiastical affairs in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, must be found the figures of the great Continental reformers, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and the rest. The English reformers grafted shoots from their vigorous branches upon the native tree planted by Wickliffe, a still living

though far from flourishing stem; and it was to this powerful foreign influence that the renascent Church in this island owed its basis of Calvinism. Upon Calvin, Beza, Peter Martyr and others of the Continental band, the religious Englishman of the times of Elizabeth and James looked back with profound veneration; Herbert himself, it will be remembered, expressly claimed their support in his controversy with Melville over the Anglican ceremonial. No one to-day would wish to underrate their services in the cause of intellectual and spiritual progress, however the value of the systems they erected in place of the old ecclesiastical order may now be called in question. We are all dissolvents of existing systems, says Matthew Arnold; and perhaps ultimately our severest criticism of their labours will be only that they failed to act on his then unwritten counsel, not to be acrid dissolvents. But even to this complaint they would doubtless have ready the reply that the triple-crowned monster against whom they fought had grown so great and terrible that smoother methods would not avail.

Certainly the politic queen under whose rule both Calvinist and Anglican found protection—the former, it is true, only when he conformed to the outward observances of the Church—cannot be accused of acridly dissolving the religious sys-

tem of her ancestors. On the contrary, her love for the older ceremonial is well known; and it was her resolve to change its details as little as possible that caused the discontent of the more ardent Protestants of her day. To her, indeed, the charge must be laid of nursing the seeds which were to bring forth fruit in the Papistical practices by which Andrewes and Laud scandalised a later generation of Puritans; but the small care she had for merely theological questions, so long as they did not give rise to political parties dangerous to her throne, allowed the doctrines of Calvinism to grow exceedingly in her reign. Thus it was that men and women whose beliefs agreed with what has been called the "Geneva platform" were found worshipping under Anglican formularies, though the more strenuous among them evaded their requirements whenever possible. But it was this half-acquiescent and continually repressed Puritanism within the Church—for most of the Puritans were Calvinistic in creed if not in their theories of Church government—that, joined to other causes, led to the great disruption of the Civil War.

The changes made in the services of the English Church in the reigns of Henry the Eighth and his son Edward the Sixth, and confirmed or modified by Queen Elizabeth, have been exhaustively dis-

cussed by later historians. Among many others, it need not be said, was the substitution of the Book of Common Prayer, in "a tongue understanded of the people," for the old Latin Liturgies from which a large part of its contents had been taken. Another was the abolition of certain material adjuncts of worship which were deemed of Popish origin; and yet another was the administering of the Communion in both kinds to the laity—"The Supper of the Lord and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass," as it was described in the first prayer book of the boy king. Probably the most striking change in the interior of the Churches of the time was caused by the destruction of the altar at the east end, and in many cases the lowering of the chancel floor to the level of the nave. Early in the reign of Elizabeth—the more advanced Puritans no longer believing in the sacrificial element in the Eucharist—many altars in parish Churches were riotously destroyed; but by her injunctions the wooden Communion tables which were substituted for them should have been placed at the east end of the chancel where the altar had stood, "so to stand saving when the Communion of the Sacrament is to be distributed; at which time the same shall be so placed within the chancel, as whereby the minister may be more conveniently heard, and

the communicants also more conveniently and in more number communicate." But, owing to the trouble of moving them, they were usually allowed to remain in one place, in many of the parish Churches lengthwise in the middle of the chancel or even in the nave, and in the royal chapels and most of the cathedrals altarwise at the east end. The frequent desecration of the Holy Table, by thoughtless or purposely irreverent persons, when kept in the more exposed position, doubtless led, together with the revived sacrificial theory of the Eucharist, to its return under the Laudian rule to the eastern wall of the Church; while the erection of enclosing rails was due to the same precaution. George Herbert, it may be said, was unquestionably familiar with both arrangements, whatever spiritual significance he may have attached to them. Throughout his Westminster schooldays, in the time of Neile as well as Andrewes, the altar of the Abbey Church stood in its present "eastward" position, and was carefully tended; the great sum for those days of £58 being expended on a large "backe Front of Cloathe of gold and blue velvett" for its adornment, while another altar cloth for daily use cost £22; and the beautiful palls offered by James and his queen at their coronation were applied to the same purpose. At Westminster also the use of copes and wafer

breads was maintained; to the scandalising of Parliament, whose members decided, in 1614, to receive the Communion at St. Margaret's Church instead of the Abbey, "for feare of copes and wafer cakes." With these usages Herbert must have been well acquainted in his boyhood; but at his college chapel (Trinity) a different order prevailed. Here, during his whole connection of nearly twenty years with the society, from 1609 to 1628, the Communion table appears to have stood in the middle of the chapel in the lengthwise position common in parish Churches; and in view of the at least doctrinal Calvinism of the Masters, and the secular uses to which the college chapels were often applied, it may not have been treated with over-reverence. Not, indeed, until two years after his death, and seven after giving up his Fellowship, was it agreed (1635) "to set the Communion Table in the Chappell . . . at the upper end, and the ground to be raysed, and that the Chapel be adorned accordingly;" the recent elevation of Bishop Laud to the primacy possibly affecting the views of the college authorities.[1] It

[1] The Archbishop never made any formal visitation of the Universities; the foreshadowed troubles of the reign (that of Charles the First) warning him of its danger in time. In anticipation, however, of his coming to Cambridge, John Bastwick, one of the pilloried (and mutilated) Puritan pamphleteers, thus wrote to "The Vertuous and elect Lady, the Lady Walgrave"

may be worthy of note that Herbert himself, in his chapter on "The Parson's Church" (in *The Country Parson*), makes no mention of the position of the Table, and merely directs that "the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font, be as they ought for those great duties that are performed in them." No doubt other marked changes were to be seen in the Churches most exposed to the rigours of Puritan zeal, such as the absence of crosses, images, and windows containing prayers for the dead, invocations to saints, and the like; but the great destruction in this kind was not to come until the Civil Wars.

(after describing the pomp and grandeur of the Archbishop's progress to and from the Star Chamber):—

"But how magnificent and glorious will this man be, think you, good Madam, when he goeth in state and great power to Cambridge and Oxford in his metropoliticall rogation and perambulation, and with a rod in his hand in the schooles, to whip those naughty scholars that will not learn well their lesson of conformity; and those lewd and wicked boyes that will not be reverend at devised service; nor will not cringe to the Altar, nor turne their faces to the East; nor worship the communion table, nor cap and crouch at the naming of the letters and sillables of Jesus, and doe all other ecclesiastical and tumultuous drudgeryes: I am persuaded there will be mighty state & crying out 'roome for my Lord's grace! Gentlemen and scholars be uncovered, put of [*sic*] your hats & caps and be hanged, my Lord's grace is coming, my Lord's grace sees yee!'"

Deprivation of one's ears obviously does not tend to good manners or temper; but Laud's defence of his practice in Church is at least reasonable and dignified: "Shall I bow to man in each House of Parliament, and shall I not bow to God in His House?"

Very early, preaching had been insisted on by the more ardent Protestants as one of the chief duties of the clergy, if they did not universally give it the first place. The bishop not less than the parish priest must be a constant preacher; and Latimer's fierce denunciation of the unpreaching prelates of his time, whom in his famous sermon "On the Ploughers" he urged to learn diligence of the devil, if they would not "learne of God and good man," found its echo with the later reformers. The "dumb dogs" of the Church, as well as the scandalous and the Papistically inclined, were to be cast out altogether. In the view of many, the chief function of the Universities was to supply the land with efficient preachers; and their failure, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, to satisfy this popular demand was doubtless one cause of the curious development known as prophesying or exercises. These remarkable gatherings, which might be called local schools of oratory and Scripture exposition, may perhaps be best described in the words of Bacon, who himself favoured them as a practical training for the clergy in the preacher's art :—

"The ministers within a precinct," he says, "did meet upon a week day in some principal town, where there was some ancient grave minister that was president, and an auditory admitted of

gentlemen or other persons of leisure. Then every minister successively, beginning with the youngest, did handle one and the same part of Scripture, spending severally some quarter of an hour or better, and in the whole some two hours; and so, the exercise being begun and concluded with prayer, and the president giving a text for the next meeting, the assembly was dissolved. And this was, as I take it, a fortnight's exercise. . . ."

Though often long, Fuller declares that the prophesyings were seldom tedious, the attention of the audience being "entertained with much variety." But it requires no great knowledge of the age to see that the dialectical fluency thus gendered might not always be confined to parochial or even theological subjects; and in the end they were prohibited by the queen, although Archbishop Grindal supported them manfully to his own undoing. Fuller himself urges the objections to them with some force. "Many modest ministers," he says, "and these profitable preachers in their private parishes, were loath to appear in this public way; which made them undeservedly slighted and neglected . . .;" while "many young men, of more boldness than learning, readiness than solidity, carried away the credit." Besides this and the jarring of personal reflections, "many would make impertinent excursions

from their text, to inveigh against the present discipline and government of the Church." The strongest argument against them, however, was the discredit they threw on the regular Church services: "These Prophesyings, being accounted the fairs for spiritual merchandises, made the weekly markets for the same holy commodities, on the Lord's Day, to be less respected." The "bold bad men" of ready conception and fluent oratory, who thus exalted themselves, were almost without exception of the Puritan if not of the Calvinistic party; and they made little secret of their contempt for the prescribed ritual of the Church. Some, as it was said, "slubbered" over the prayers and other appointed offices with indecent haste; and others stayed outside the Church during the reading of the service,[1] waiting with impatience until their own more important functions were required. In vain had the framers of the Prayer Book laboured to supply an acceptable manual of common worship; these fathers of militant Protestantism, convinced of the all-sufficiency of the Bible, and of themselves as its inspired interpreters, were not to be bound in the swaddling-clothes of established forms, however admirable they might seem to their nominal superiors in Church and State. They might be silenced for

[1] Their congregations, it is said, often did so as well.

the time; but time, as we know, brought its revenge in the not far distant future.

An inevitable consequence of this slighting of the services of the Church was the common neglect of its material fabric; though there were many other contributing causes. The great revolution in religious things, which had lately swept over the land, had left much disorder in its train. In the former age, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the appropriation of their lands and revenues by greedy courtiers and nobles, had set a bad precedent of sacrilege; and Queen Elizabeth herself had not scrupled to keep the sees of bishops vacant that she might use their incomes for her own ends. Hence it is small wonder that the parishes were often ill served, or not served at all. The later Visitation Articles of the time of Laud leave no room to doubt the condition of many of the parish Churches, especially in the smaller villages and more remote rural districts. Many were in a ruinous state; some were used as granaries and receptacles of other farm produce by local landowners; some were grossly profaned by making them resorts for popular amusements—in one recorded instance for cock-fighting. The keeping of schools in their chancels seems to have been a frequent though more venial practice; and of any

special regard for their sacredness as places of worship there was seldom any trace. Neglect, carelessness, and irreverence abounded in many parishes. "Surplices were not worn, kneeling at the reception of the Communion was not enforced. The Holy Table standing in the middle of the nave was used for ordinary business, or even as a convenient seat. . . . Trainbands met in the churchyards, Clergy openly attacked their parishioners by name from the pulpit, Church property was stolen or wasted." So writes a modern historian of the period,[1] and of the conditions born of ancient abuse, of opposed ideals as to the nature of the Church, and of mere human laxity and dulness of soul. Yet the higher and better ideal was not dead, and required only the impulse of a master mind and hand to fan it into life. But the mind had great need to be sympathetic, and the hand to be gentle as well as strong.

That the man who essayed the task of reform, and, in spite of his apparent failure, is held to have accomplished it, possessed this union of qualities, even his best admirers do not pretend. But all are agreed as to his strength. The virile and uncompromising Archbishop, William Laud, stands out among the figures of his age as the embodiment of force and intellectual pertinacity. Thanks

[1] H. O. Wakeman, *The Church and the Puritans*, p. 128.

to the labours of later and less prejudiced students, the ogre of early Puritan writers has been replaced by a human being of religious life and noble ambitions, though of narrow if clear vision, and encumbered with a somewhat snappish temper. To-day, Clarendon's description of him is considered to be substantially true, that "he was a man of great parts, and very exemplar virtues, allayed and discredited by some unpopular natural infirmities; the greatest of which was, besides a hasty, sharp way of expressing himself, that he believed innocence of heart, and integrity of manners, was a guard strong enough to secure any man in his voyage through this world." The main facts of his life are familiar. He was born at Reading in 1573, his father being a prosperous clothier of that town. Entering St. John's College, Oxford, at the age of sixteen, he soon became a Fellow; and, after ordination and holding one or two livings in the country, was elected its President in 1611. Three years before, he had been appointed chaplain to Dr. Neile, Bishop of Rochester, by whom he was introduced to King James; who in turn made him his own chaplain, and, after sundry other preferments, Bishop of St. David's. He was the friend and confessor of Buckingham. By King Charles, whose coronation he arranged and declared to be "one of

the most punctual coronations since the Conquest," he was promoted to the bishopric of Bath and Wells, and two years later to that of London. In 1633, the year of Herbert's death, he became Archbishop of Canterbury, in succession to the unlucky homicide, Abbot. His own views of royal and ecclesiastical prerogative agreeing with those of King Charles, he became his ally and supporter in his opposition to Parliament and the rising tide of popular liberty ; and like Strafford, his secular aid in carrying out the king's schemes, he was imprisoned, attainted of high treason, and beheaded (January, 1644-45). Four years later Charles himself suffered death.

Here, only his labours as a reformer of the Church need be considered. At Oxford, he found Calvinistic doctrines dominant, as they were also at Cambridge, and stood forth at once as their opponent. Calvinism, of course, is not to be lightly dismissed as a mere system of Election, Reprobation, and so on, or without reference to St. Augustine and St. Paul ; but it is hardly the whole substance of Christianity, and this the theologians of the time evidently considered it to be. "All the Calvinian rigors in matters of predestination, and the points depending thereupon," says Peter Heylin, the lively Oxford historian and controversialist, "were received as the established

doctrine of the Church of England . . . Episcopacy maintained by halves . . . the Church of Rome inveighed against as the 'whore of Babylon' . . . the Pope as publicly maintained to be Antichrist, or the Man of Sin, and that positively and magisterially as if it had been one of the chief articles of the Christian faith; and . . . the visibility of the Church must be no otherwise maintained than by looking for it in the scattered conventicles of the Berengarians in Italy, the Albigenses in France, the Hussites in Bohemia, and the Wickliffists among ourselves. Nor was there any greater care taken for the forms and orders of this Church: the surplice so disused . . . and the Divine Service of the Church so slubbered over in most of the colleges that the prelates and clergy assembled in Convocation anew in 1603 were necessitated to pass two canons to bring them back again to the ancient practice." This probably is no fancy picture; and at the sister University the same influences held sway, especially at Sidney and Emmanuel. But other influences were at work, among them the arguments of Hooker, and the eloquent persuasives of Andrewes; and Laud, who may be said to have put the principles of Andrewes into practice, became an advocate of the views of theology and Churchmanship known as Anglican, or, from their supposed resemblance to those held

by the party in Holland who revolted against the severer doctrines of Calvin, more commonly as Arminian. The bishop who ordained him said, in words now familiar, that, "finding his study raised above the systems and opinions of the age, upon the noble foundations of the fathers, councils, and ecclesiastical historians," he "early presaged that he would be an instrument of restoring the Church from the narrow and private principles of modern times to the more enlarged, liberal, and public sentiments of the apostolic and primitive ages."

Unfortunately these enlarged and liberal sentiments, with him and other members of his party, were commonly joined to ceremonial practices believed by most Protestants of the day to be Papistical and subversive of the Reformation: hence his task of defending them from the attacks of the Romanists on the one hand, and the Puritans on the other, proved a formidable one. Of his ably managed controversy with the Jesuit, Fisher, which he undertook at the command of King James, it is needless to speak; nor can his public and official acts be more than summarised. Conscientious, sincere, and wholly devoted to the welfare of the Church he loved, he took vigorously in hand, when raised to places of power, the burden of its amendment, and spared

himself as little as he spared others in doing so. Where Andrewes as a bishop had counselled, he commanded; and where Andrewes had used persuasion, he used force. The older and milder prelate, in his visitation articles, had, it is true, asked parishioners, "Doth your minister resort to any taverns or alehouses? . . . Doth he use any base or servile labour, drinking, riot, dice, cards, tables, or any unlawful games? Is he contentious, a hunter, hawker, swearer, dancer, usurer? . . . Is he one that plieth not his study?" with other strict inquiries as to his character and efficiency; but in matters of ritual, although his own private practice is well known, he is said to have been satisfied if things were done with decency and reverence. Laud went much farther than this. Backed by the king, the Court of High Commission and the odious Star Chamber—yet even more strongly by the compelling logic of his mind, to which, if a thing seemed right to do it was wrong not to do it—he proceeded to the practical business of reform. He drove Calvinistic preaching from the pulpits; he obliged the "lecturers"—Puritan preachers licensed by the bishops and supported by corporations and by other means—to read the Church service before beginning their sermons; he compelled bishops to reside in their sees, and look to the manners and morals of their clergy;

he caused the altars and Communion tables to be replaced in their old positions, and railed in from profane contamination; and he required communicants to kneel instead of sit when receiving the Communion. Besides the parish churches, he set in order the more delinquent cathedral chapters, enforcing better care of their muniments and properties, and improving their services so much that people were said to flock to them in large numbers, after the earlier services at church.

His implacable activity did not confine itself to his own province, nor indeed to England. He insisted that the chaplains on the king's ships, in the English regiments abroad, and even those in the service of English merchant companies in foreign parts, should use the Prayer Book; and the influence he had brought to bear on the Dutch Government made Holland no longer a refuge for Nonconformists. In his zeal for discipline, he spared neither high nor low. If he suppressed humble conventicles, and forced the Prayer Book on the Protestant refugees from the Continent, he brought to account the wealthy squires for their encroachments on glebe and churchyard and other properties of the Church. Not less by the laity than by the clergy his hand was felt. Tradesmen must close their shops on Sunday; innkeepers must not serve their cus-

tomers during the Church service; children must be brought to the afternoon catechisings; mothers must be churched; and all at the sacred offices must bow at the name of Jesus. His part in the cruel sentences passed on the Puritan libellers, Prynne, Bastwick, and others, has been sufficiently condemned; but in an age that still burned at the stake scores of ignorant and in most cases harmless and merely weak-minded persons on the charge of witchcraft, their severity was great only by comparison.

It is impossible, however, to recount all the acts by which the indomitable archbishop purged the Church of its Puritan leaven, whether it took the form of Presbyterianism or of Independency, and brought it to something resembling uniformity and order. By many, the reforms and the order were gladly welcomed; but their association with a political cause justly held by the majority of Englishmen to be opposed to their liberties made them a part of the dangerous organisation against which they were contending, and hastened the fall of Church and king alike. If the earlier Protestant reformers were acrid dissolvents of the Roman rule, Laud was equally harsh in his attempt to revive the Anglican system by crushing the Puritans; and with both reaction followed by an inevitable law. Therefore his place in that

re-ordering of the English Church which began with the Reformation and is far from completed to-day—if continual evolution and adaptation are not rather to be its true destiny—cannot be called that of an ecclesiastical statesman. Yet the title of one of its great reformers must be conceded to him, though the house which he raised fell almost at once in ruins. The grim order of the Commons, in the January after his impeachment, that "commissions be sent into all counties for the defacing, demolition, and quite taking away of all images, altars or tables turned altarwise, crucifixes, superstitious pictures, monuments and relics of idolatry, out of all churches or chapels"—an order, as we know, carried out with infinite relish and thoroughness—reads like the total undoing of his life's work. Undone it certainly was for the time; and with it the work of Hooker and Andrewes, and of the devoted band who with them had laboured to rebuild the walls of Zion on their old foundations. The small, alert, boyish-faced primate, despite his learning and virtues, his noble benefactions, and his intense love for what he called "the beauty of holiness" in outward things, proved the very stormy petrel of his party; and the herald if not chief cause of the great storm which, in Jeremy Taylor's words, "dashed the vessel of the Church all in pieces."

Comparatively few persons in our time understand how complete was the wreck. It was now no mere purging the Church of superstitious practices or ornaments—of the marriage ring, the sign of the cross in baptism, the wearing of the surplice, the eastward genuflection, and the rest; nor was it the disestablishment and disendowment which is supposed, like the sword of Damocles, to hang over its head to-day. These things might have satisfied the more moderate Puritans at an earlier stage: now they demanded, and would have, a root and branch extermination. If Laud had been "thorough," they were equally so. The Church of the English as a visible corporate body was utterly destroyed. With the death of the Archbishop, the Prayer Book, as it was said, died also; and with the king the order of bishops and its subordinate hierarchy. The story of the wreckage of the interiors of cathedrals and churches by the Parliamentary troops, who at Peterborough and elsewhere "did miserably havoc" their furniture and adornments, need not be told here: it was part of the ordeal of humiliation through which the Church, for the follies as well as sins of its members, had to pass. The forbidding of the use of the Prayer Book by private as well as public assemblies marks the zenith of Puritan tyranny; but its very prohibi-

tion showed its value as an instrument of spiritual worship. The evicted clergymen who, like Bishop Hackett, committed its contents to memory, and, without divulging their source, repeated the prayers with the entire acceptance of those who had refused them when enforced by episcopal order, afforded a far more convincing proof of their efficacy than all the treatises of the divines and liturgists. And those who, like John Evelyn at Sayes Court, Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding, and their devout fellow-royalists in private houses and in exile, maintained its use to their own frequent danger, finding strength and comfort in its offices, did more for the true upbuilding of the overthrown Church than all the props of establishment which have been raised about it since the social and political rebound of the Restoration.

CHAPTER X

TRANSITIONAL

WITH the death of George Herbert's Court hopes, his true life may be said to have begun. If he had yet many severe conflicts to endure, they were those that rightly belong to the spiritual warfare, and tend to the fortifying of the soul—no soldier of the Cross dare refuse them, with the peaceable fruits they bring forth. How long he remained in his penitential retirement Walton does not say; but the decision he had framed there was not long kept secret:—

"He did at his return to London acquaint a Court friend with his resolution to enter into Sacred Orders, who persuaded him to alter it, as too mean an employment, and too much below his birth and the excellent abilities and endowments of his mind. To whom he replied, 'It hath been formerly adjudged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest families on earth; and though the iniquity of the late times have made Clergymen meanly valued,

and the sacred name of Priest contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities, to advance the glory of that God that gave them; knowing that I can never do too much for Him that hath done so much for me as to make me a Christian. And I will labour to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus.'"

If there was ever any appearance of wavering afterwards, it seems to have been due to a sense of his own unworthiness for the priestly office rather than a looking back on the gilded toys he had renounced. Happily, the removal of his patrons in some degree relieved him of the responsibility of choice, and gave him the most practical of all intimations of the Supreme Will, at least as to his seeking a civil or a Court career. By the wise, the course of events is accepted as the Divine ruling; and Herbert's prompt if painfully-reached submission to his changed destiny seems to have been followed by an immediate clearing of his spiritual skies. Henceforward, thanks no doubt in part to Walton's sympathetic sense of his new conditions, we seem to enjoy with him a feeling of disentanglement, and to walk in smoother paths under brightening heavens, though his purposes

are not less strong than before. The parson no longer wears the ambiguous "tye-wig," but appears in his proper canonical habit, or at least sets himself to the rightful work of his calling. We hear no more now of his laudable ambition to be something more than he then was, or of his genteel humour for clothes and Court-like company; but rather of church-building, marriage, and other legitimate preparatives for the life of a parish clergyman.

For his occupations and places of sojourn in the five years (1625-30) between the death of King James and his induction into his living at Bemerton, we have little besides the charming but chronologically difficult narrative of his biographer for our guidance. How they were spent must be largely a matter of conjecture and inference; but probably he was seldom at Cambridge, and not often, if at all, at Court. Also, it may be supposed that he laid aside his studies in the Italian, Spanish, and French tongues, and betook himself to that serious study of divinity which he had begun at an earlier age, and perhaps never wholly abandoned. Walton gives us to understand that he was ordained deacon immediately after the king's death and his retirement into Kent: "within that year," he says vaguely. His conclusion seems based on the fact that in the follow-

ing year (on 15th July, 1626) the records of Lincoln Cathedral showed that he was "made prebendary of Layton Ecclesia, in the diocese of Lincoln," by John Williams, the famous courtier-bishop; but later writers do not consider the evidence as conclusive, and surmise that he held the prebend as a layman, as he already held the sinecure rectorship of Whitford, given him by King James. Whether he was then ordained or not, he at once accepted the secular responsibilities of his charge. The prebend carried with it the patronage of Leighton Bromswold, a small country parish in Huntingdonshire, the Church of which, an ancient building dedicated to "St. Mary the Blessed Virgin," was one of those neglected and "nasty lying" sanctuaries which Laud at his trial held to be largely accountable for the decline of religion throughout the land. The manner in which Herbert set about its restoration is characteristic; and the story is told in Walton's best style:—

"This Layton Ecclesia," he says, using the older spelling, "is a village near to Spalden, in the County of Huntingdon, and the greatest part of the Parish Church was fallen down, and that of it which stood was so decayed, so little, and so useless, that the parishioners could not meet to perform their duty to God in public prayer

LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD CHURCH: INTERIOR

PRESENT TIME

and praises; and thus it had been for almost twenty years, in which time there had been some faint endeavours for a collection, to enable the parishioners to rebuild it; but with no success, till Mr. Herbert undertook it; and he, by his own and the contributions of many of his kindred, and other noble friends, undertook the re-edification of it, and made it so much his whole business that he became restless till he saw it finished as it now stands; being for the workmanship a costly mosaic; for the form an exact cross; and for the decency and beauty, I am assured, it is the most remarkable Parish Church that this nation affords. He lived to see it so wainscoted as to be exceeded by none; and by his order the reading pew and pulpit were a little distant from each other, and both of an equal height; for he would often say, 'They should neither have a precedency or priority of the other; but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren, and have equal honour and estimation.'"

The account of his mother's opposition, and his manner of overcoming it, is also familiar:—

"Being informed of his intentions to rebuild that Church," Walton continues, "and apprehending the great trouble and charge that he was likely to draw upon himself, his relations, and friends, before it could be finished [she] sent for him from London

to Chelsea (where she then dwelt), and at his coming said, 'George, I sent for you to persuade you to commit simony, by giving your patron as good a gift as he has given you: namely, that you give him back his prebend: for, George, it is not for your weak body and empty purse to undertake to build Churches.' Of which he desired he might have a day's time to consider, and then make her an answer; and at his return to her the next day, when he had first desired her blessing, and she had given it him, his next request was, 'That she would, at the age of thirty-three years, allow him to become an undutiful son; for he had made a vow to God that, if he were able, he would rebuild that Church.' And then showed her such reasons for his resolution that she presently subscribed to be one of his benefactors, and undertook to solicit William Earl of Pembroke to become another, who subscribed for fifty pounds; and not long after, by a witty and persuasive letter from Mr. Herbert, made it fifty pounds more. And in this nomination of some of his benefactors, James Duke of Lennox, and his brother, Sir Henry Herbert, ought to be remembered; as also the bounty of Mr. Nicholas Ferrar and Mr. Arthur Woodnot."

It is peculiarly fitting that the first labour of the poet of the Church, after definitely deciding

to "enter into sacred orders," should have been the repair of its visible fabric. If men and women are to feel the inspiration of the Church music that moved him so strongly, assigning him as he says a dainty lodging in its pleasure-house, it is desirable if not necessary that the material house should first be erected. And if allegories and symbolical teachings are to be derived from the church floor :—

> . . . that square and speckled stone
> Which looks so firm and strong,
> is Patience ;
> And the other black and grave, wherewith each one
> Is checkered all along,
> Humility ;

a more palpable cement than the abstractions of "Love and Charity" is required for its secure laying. Also church walls demand windows, preferably of pictured glass, otherwise the preacher's message is of less effect :—

> But when Thou dost anneal in glass Thy story,
> Making Thy life to shine within
> The holy preachers, then the light and glory
> More reverend grows, and more doth win ;
> Which else shows waterish, bleak, and thin.

The strong argument of beauty and decency in public worship cannot be enforced in ruined and defiled or in carelessly-kept buildings ; and George Herbert's clear recognition of this truth, ignored

or disbelieved by many of his contemporaries—and by some of his successors in the not very remote past—shows the practical bent of his genius not less than his religious zeal.

The re-edification of Leighton Bromswold Church is one of the chief links connecting the name of George Herbert with that of his friend and literary executor, Nicholas Ferrar, founder of the remarkable religious household at Little Gidding. Barnabas Oley, the royalist divine and Ferrar's fellow collegian at Clare Hall, Cambridge (at one time its tutor and president), seems to have been the only person of his time besides Walton who attempted anything like a biography of the poet ; and in his somewhat rhapsodical and wandering commentary on his life and writings, prefixed to the original edition (1652) of *The Country Parson*, he has much to say of the relations between his two more famous contemporaries. From his story, it appears that Herbert, on receiving the prebend of Leighton, wished to transfer it to Ferrar, who was then a deacon :—

". . . which I think, because he lived far from, and so could not attend the duty of that place, he would faine have resigned to Master Ferrar, and often earnestly sued him to discharge him of it ; but Master F. wholly refused, and diverted or

directed his charity, as I take it, to the re-edifying of the ruined Church of Leighton, where the corps of the Prebend lay. So that the Church of England owes to him, besides what good may come by this book [*The Country Parson*] towards the repair of us Churchmen in point of morals, the reparation of a Church materiall and erection of that costly piece of Mosaick or Solomonick work, *The Temple*, which flourishes and stands inviolate when our other magnificences are desolate and despised."[1]

John Ferrar, the elder brother of Nicholas and his appreciative biographer, agrees with Walton as to the ruinous condition of the Church ; it was, he says, "fallen down a long time in the dust, the Vicar and parish fain to use my Lord Duke's[2] great Hall for their prayers and preaching ;" and he confirms Oley's account of Ferrar's urgent appeal to his Cambridge friend to attempt its repair. He "very earnestly hereupon assaults his brother Herbert to set to work and to try what he could do amongst his friends . . . promising all the assistance he could in that kind ; he would undertake his brother John Ferrar should very carefully prosecute the business, if once begun, by

[1] Grosart, iii., 230.

[2] James, 4th Duke of Lennox, nephew of Herbert's deceased patron.

three times a week attending the workmen and providing all materials." In the end, he continues, "a handsome and uniform and (as the country termed it) a fine neat Church was erected, inside and outside finished, not only to the parishioners' own much comfort and joy, but to the admiration of all men. . . . Only the steeple could not be compassed, which afterwards the most noble, religious, worthy, good Duke of Lennox did perform at his own proper cost and charges, to the memorial of his honour."

In connection with Leighton Church, John Ferrar, in the memoir of his brother just quoted, gives two letters from Herbert to his friend; the longer of which, as the poet's English letters are all too few, may here be transcribed. The omission of architectural details is made by John Ferrar himself, as he probably considered them trivial or irrelevant :—

"My Exceeding Dear Brother,

"Although you have a much better paymaster than myself, even Him Whom we both serve; yet I shall ever put your care of Leighton upon my account and give you myself for it, to be yours for ever. God knows I have desired a long time to do the place good, and have endeavoured many ways to find a man for it. And now my

LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD CHURCH: SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF EXTERIOR

FROM ZOUCH'S EDITION OF WALTON'S *LIVES*

gracious Lord God is pleased to give me you for the man I desired, for which I humbly thank Him, and am so far from giving you cause to apology about your counselling me herein, that I take it exceeding kindly of you. I refuse not advice from the meanest that creeps upon God's earth, no, not though the advice step so far as to be reproof; much less can I disesteem it from you, whom I esteem to be God's faithful and diligent servant, not considering you any other ways, as neither I myself desire to be considered. Particularly, I like all your addresses, and, for ought I see, they are ever to be liked. [So he goes on in the discourse of the building the Church, in such and such a form, as N. F. advised, and letting N. F. know all he had, and would do, to get moneys to proceed in it; and concludes thus.] You write very lovingly, that all your things are mine. If so, let this of Leighton Church the care be amongst the chiefest also; so I have requested Mr. W.[1] for his part. Now God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you more and more, and so turn you all, in your several ways, one to the other, that ye may be a heavenly comfort, to His praise and the great joy of

"Yours, brother and servant in Christ Jesus,

"GEORGE HERBERT.

[1] Woodnoth or Woodnot.

"Postscript:—

"As I had written thus much, I received a letter from my brother, Sir Henry H., of the blessed success that God had given us, by moving the duchess's heart to an exceeding cheerfulness, in signing £100 with her own hands, and promising to get her son to do as much, with some little apology that she had done nothing in it (as my brother writes) hitherto. She referred it also to my brother to name at first what the sum should be; but he told her Grace, that he would by no means do so, urging that charity must be free. She liked her book well, and has given order to the tenants at Leighton to make payment of it. God Almighty prosper the work. Amen."

The Church stands to-day, a monument to the devotion not only of George Herbert, but of Nicholas Ferrar as well; and also of John Ferrar, whose thrice-weekly visits and oversight of workmen ensured the thorough performance of the task. The village itself is a small hamlet about ten miles west of the town of Huntingdon, far distant from railways, and in the pleasant and sufficiently wooded part of the agricultural shire, which, on its northern and eastern sides, merges into the expansive plain of the Fens. Pastoral, quiet, and even dull as the scenery may appear to some, it is still untouched by the larger innovations of

modern times, and doubtless reflects its former aspect of peace and remoteness from the haunts of men. The building, despite Walton's high praises, cannot be said to differ greatly from many other well-preserved and carefully tended English parish churches; and the prosaic description of the guide-books, "an ancient cruciform edifice of stone in the Early English and Perpendicular styles, consisting of chancel, nave, transepts, porches, and an embattled western tower," might be paralleled in a score of instances elsewhere. Within, however, the "reading pew" and the pulpit still remain as Herbert left them, and are applied to the same uses; one being placed at each side of the chancel arch, and "both of an equal height," their appearance suggesting two pulpits rather than the customary prayer-desk and rostrum of Anglican worship.

In nothing is the change in the poet's purposes and outlook on life more noticeable than in the new friends who have taken the place of his royal and noble patrons, and other persons of the Court circle. They are for the most part members of a group bound together by a similarity of feelings, and a rejection of the ideals and modes of living followed by many of their contemporaries. To describe them as moved by a common impulse towards monasticism would

doubtless be wrong ; but they agreed in desiring to follow a form of religious life, which was opposed to the lives of the more lax Churchmen of the day, not less than to those of the more strenuous Puritans. Of this new group, the Arthur Woodnot, or Woodnoth, already mentioned may be taken as a type. A relative of the Ferrars, who were themselves of the merchant class, and formerly a goldsmith in Foster Lane, London, "He was," says Walton, "a man that had considered overgrown estates do often require more care and watchfulness to preserve than get them, and considered that there be many discontents that riches cure not ; and did therefore set limits to himself, as to desire of wealth. And having attained so much as to be able to show some mercy to the poor, and preserve a competence for himself, he dedicated the remaining part of his life to the service of God, and to be useful to his friends ; and he proved to be so to Mr. Herbert ; for beside his own bounty, he collected and returned most of the money that was paid for the rebuilding of that church ; he kept all the account of the charges, and would often go down to state them, and see all the workmen paid." Before this, he had proved a useful friend to Herbert's father and mother ; and it was he, according to Walton, who carried his long letter

of consolation to his ailing mother, some years previously. From this time onward he seems to be constantly visiting and assisting the poet: he became the sole executor of his worldly estate; and he was one of the small group who attended him in his last illness, and closed his eyes after death.

It may be well to pass somewhat quickly over the other recorded events of Herbert's life before his acceptance of the Bemerton living. The note of breaking away from old pursuits and ambitions is constantly struck, and also the note of passing mortality: Bishop Andrewes, his beloved exemplar and friend, died in the same year with the king. Bacon died the year after, and his mother in the year following. Her funeral sermon, as already mentioned, was preached (1st July, 1627) by the fluent Donne, then Dean of St. Paul's, in the parish church of Chelsea; on which occasion Walton tells us he wept, as he well might in view of her noble benefactions to himself and his family. The sermon was published with Herbert's *Parentalia* added, and in spite of its frequent quaintness of style, forms an interesting confirmation of Walton's picture of her charm and worth. His references to the qualities which endeared her to her youthful second husband, Sir John Danvers, may be quoted. "As the well-tuning of an instru-

ment makes higher and lower strings of one sound, so the inequality of their years was thus reduced to an evenness—that she had a cheerfulness agreeable to his youth, and he had a sober staidness conformable to her more advanced years. . . . God gave her such a comeliness as, though she were not proud of it, yet she was so content with it as not to go about to mend it by art. . . . And for her attire, which is another personal circumstance, it was never sumptuous, never sordid, but always agreeable to her company, such as she might, and such as others such as she was did wear." The management of her home and its hospitalities could not escape his praise. "As her house was a court, in the conversation of the best, and an almshouse, in feeding the poor, so was it also an hospital, in ministering relief to the sick. And truly the love of doing good in this kind . . . was the honey that was spread all over her bread: the air, the perfume that breathed over all her house." There is no reason to think that his tears were not real as he recounted the virtues of the lady whose house had sheltered him from the plague, and whose hands had relieved his distress. Indeed, the sermon seems less artificial than Herbert's memorial in Latin and Greek verse; for even his ardent admirer, Barnabas Oley, confesses that the lines of "the obsequious *Parentalia*

. . . be dull or dead in comparison of his *Temple* poems."

At the close of the year in which his mother died (1627), Herbert resigned his Oratorship at Cambridge, the duties of which had long been performed by his deputy, Herbert Thorndyke. The lively Latin letter to his successor in the office, Robert Creichton, in which he gives him some playful and characteristic advice as to its management, has been preserved; but like the *Parentalia* it seems to belong to the academic life that has already fallen from him. Unfortunately, however, his ill-health was not thrown aside with his courtly ambitions :—

"About the year 1629, and the thirty-fourth of his age," says Walton (though the date was probably earlier, and the poet's age is wrongly given), "Mr. Herbert was seized with a sharp quotidian ague, and thought to remove it by the change of air; to which end he went to Woodford in Essex, but thither more chiefly to enjoy the company of his beloved brother, Sir Henry Herbert, and the other friends then of that family. In his house he remained about twelve months, and there became his own physician, and cured himself of his ague by forbearing drink, and not eating any meat, no not mutton, nor a hen or pigeon, unless they were salted; and by such a constant

diet he removed his ague, but with inconveniences that were worse; for he brought upon himself a disposition to rheums, and other weaknesses, and a supposed consumption. And it is to be noted that, in the sharpest of his extreme fits he would often say, 'Lord, abate my great affliction, or increase my patience; but, Lord, I repine not; I am dumb, Lord, before Thee, because Thou dost it.' By which, and a sanctified submission to the will of God, he showed he was inclinable to bear the sweet yoke of Christian discipline, both then and in the latter part of his life, of which there will be many true testimonies."

The malarial complaint which, in his early college days, had caused him to ride frequently from Cambridge to Newmarket for fresh air, seems never to have left him, or only to have disappeared before a worse disease; but the picture of his continual sufferings is from this time brightened by his sojourn in pleasant places, in the company of sympathetic relatives or friends. At Woodford, a pretty and retired spot about nine miles from London, within the borders of Epping Forest, he enjoyed the care and society of his younger brother Henry, with whom he seems to have been especially intimate. Already knighted, and busy with the curious duties of his post as Master of the

Revels—which included, at least at a later date, the licensing of exhibitions of elephants, beavers, and dromedaries, and the performances of quack doctors—Sir Henry Herbert bears no small resemblance to his eldest brother, the meteoric Lord of Cherbury; but there is better evidence of his regard and care for the poet. From Woodford, after a year's stay, the apparent consumptive departed in search of an air suited for the cure of his new complaint; and found it seemingly, together with a wife, in a more congenial western county. Walton's story must again be followed, with such confirmation as occasional dates and records supply. "His remove," he says, "was to Dauntsey in Wiltshire, a noble house which stands in a choice air; the owner of it then was the Lord Danvers, Earl of Danby, who loved Mr. Herbert so very much that he allowed him such an apartment in it as might best suit with his accommodation and liking. And in this place, by a spare diet, declining all perplexing studies, moderate exercise, and a cheerful conversation, his health was apparently improved to a good degree of strength and cheerfulness. And then he declared his resolution both to marry, and to enter into the sacred orders of the Priesthood."

The romance of the union appealed strongly to the poetic sense of his biographer, who was cer-

tainly no sour celibate, having himself been twice a widower; and he makes it the occasion of describing for the first time the appearance of his hero. "He was for his person of a stature inclining towards tallness; his body was very straight, and so far from being cumbered with too much flesh, that he was lean to an extremity. His aspect was cheerful, and his speech and motion did both declare him a gentleman; for they were all so meek and obliging that they purchased love and respect from all that knew him." Another writer, Aubrey, says that "he was of a very fine complexion;" and the existing portraits of him testify to his spareness, if not emaciation.

Here it may be said that Dauntsey is a small village near Malmesbury in the northern part of Wiltshire; the parish church containing an interesting monument to Henry Danvers, the Lord Danby just mentioned. He has already been referred to as the elder brother of Herbert's stepfather, Sir John Danvers. The monument, which records that he died full of "honours, woundes, and daies," has a curious epitaph on the east side composed by Herbert himself; necessarily before the earl's death, which did not take place until ten or more years after his own. Lord Danby is chiefly known as the founder of the Botanic Gardens at Oxford, the entrance gateway of which he had

built from designs by Inigo Jones; but his shelter of George Herbert in his "noble house," amidst the choice airs of the western county, forms an equal if not better title to our remembrance.

To describe the poet's courtship and marriage in any other than Walton's familiar words would be little short of profanation, though doubt as to the entire accuracy of his details may be allowed. The charms of his hero's person and character, he tells us, "begot him much love from a gentleman of a noble fortune, and a near kinsman to his friend the Earl of Danby; namely, from Mr. Charles Danvers of Bainton, in the County of Wilts, Esq.;" Bainton, or Bayntun, being situated in the western part of the shire, not far from Westbury; while the fortune-favoured gentleman was of course a kinsman of his step-father, Sir John Danvers, as well as of the earl. Walton thus continues :—

"This Mr. Danvers having known him long and familiarly, did so much affect him that he often and publicly declared a desire that Mr. Herbert would marry any of his nine daughters —for he had so many—but rather his daughter Jane than any other, because Jane was his beloved daughter. And he had often said the same to Mr. Herbert himself; and that if he could like

her for a wife, and she him for a husband, Jane should have a double blessing : and Mr. Danvers had so often said the like to Jane, and so much commended Mr. Herbert to her, that Jane became so much a Platonic as to fall in love with Mr. Herbert unseen.

"This was a fair preparation for a marriage ; but, alas! her father died before Mr. Herbert's retirement to Dauntsey ; yet some friends to both parties procured their meeting ; at which time a mutual affection entered into both their hearts, as a conqueror enters into a surprised city ; and love having got such possession, governed, and made there such laws and resolutions as neither party was able to resist ; insomuch that she changed her name into Herbert the third day after this first interview.

"This haste might in others be thought a love-frenzy, or worse ; but it was not, for they had wooed so like Princes as to have select proxies ; such as were true friends to both parties, such as well understood Mr. Herbert's and her temper of mind, and also their estâtes, so well before this interview, that the suddenness was justifiable by the strictest rules of prudence ; and the more because it proved so happy to both parties ; for the eternal Lover of mankind made them happy in each other's mutual and equal affections and

compliance : indeed, so happy that there never was any opposition betwixt them, unless it were a contest which should most incline to a compliance with the other's desires. And though this begot, and continued in them, such a mutual love, and joy, and content, as was no way defective ; yet this mutual content, and love, and joy, did receive a daily augmentation by such daily obligingness to each other, as still added such new affluences to the former fulness of these Divine souls as was only improvable in Heaven, where they now enjoy it."

The reason now urged against Walton's story of the suddenness of the match is that the lady's father was a near relative of Sir John Danvers, Herbert's step-father ; and having, as Walton asserts, known the poet "long and familiarly," and often spoken to him as well as to his daughter of each other's manifold perfections, it is somewhat improbable, though of course not impossible, that they should not have met before. But the length and manner of the courtship are of less importance than the fact that the ascetic scholar and theologian who, in his boyish verses, had scorned the beauty of woman as an unholy thing—

> Why should I women's eyes for crystal take ?—

was thus felicitously mated ; for his marriage to

Jane Danvers took place at Edington, a small village near Bainton, on the 5th of March, 1628 (by our accounting 1629), a few weeks before the completion of his thirty-sixth year.

CHAPTER XI

NICHOLAS FERRAR AND LITTLE GIDDING

TO Nicholas Ferrar the world may be said to be indebted for the message of *The Temple;* the manuscript of this, the poet's most vital and enduring work, having been sent to him almost in his dying hour, to be published or destroyed as he might think fit. Had anything dimmed his perception of its poetical or spiritual value, it is probable that George Herbert, the once admired scholar, courtier, and wit, would to-day be to us little more than a name. Happily, however, the task of literary executorship in his case could not have fallen into better hands.

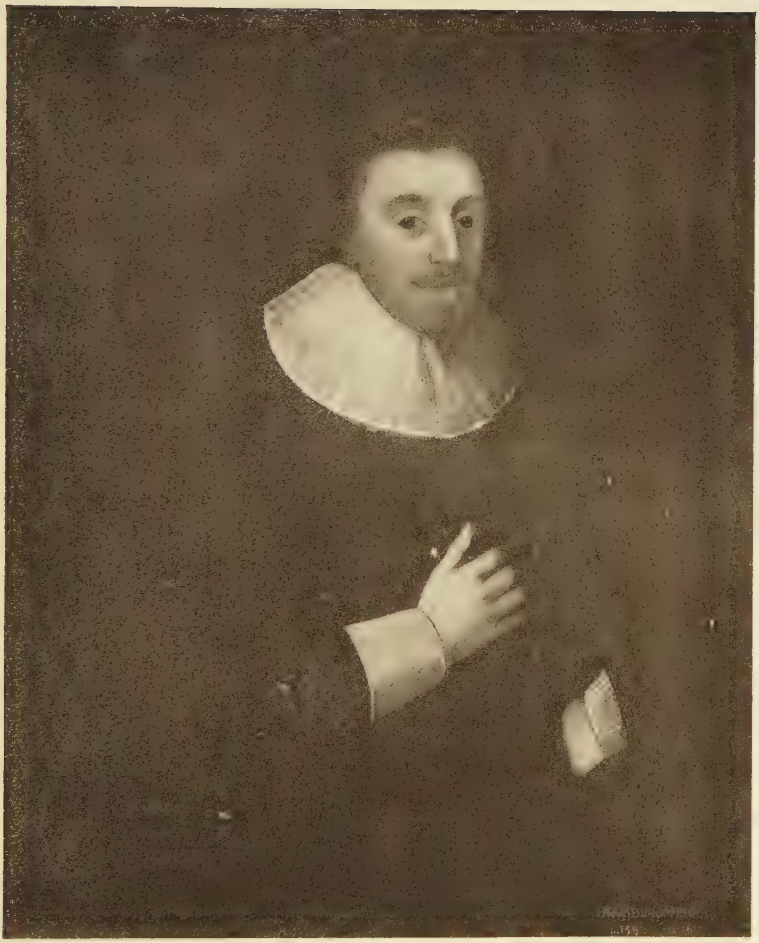
The founder of the famous household of Little Gidding—for in all essentials it was a large family living under one rule of religious discipline—was born in the same year as his friend, by our modern reckoning on the 22nd of February, 1593. His father, also named Nicholas, belonged to the virile race of merchant adventurers to whom the nation owed no small part of its prosperity in the

reign of Queen Elizabeth. A gentleman by birth, as his son John Ferrar tells us, he came of "the family of the Ferrars in Yorkshire," and gained a good reputation as a London merchant, "trading to the East and West Indies, Spain, Flanders, Germany, etc." His "good free table" was resorted to by many lords, knights, and ladies, among them such "men of eminency" as Sir Francis Drake, Sir John Hawkins, and Sir Walter Raleigh; "all gallant seamen, with whom he was an adventurer, evermore affecting the planting of Christian religion in the new world . . . as well as his own lawful trading." His desire to unite missionary with commercial enterprise is shown by the bequest in his will of £300 to the "Colledge in Virginia, to bee paid when there shall be ten of the infidels' children placed in it," and by other like legacies. Of his mother, the same son gives a still more pleasing account: she was of an old Cheshire family, the Woodnoths of Shavington, who, he says, had exercised lordship there for five hundred years. By all testimonies she was hardly less remarkable than the mother of George Herbert himself, though of a more serious cast of mind. "There were few women," her son affirms, "that exceeded her in comeliness of her body, excellent beauty . . . fair, modest, and sober deportment;

grave in her looks, humble in her carriage towards all people, superlative in discretion . . . of few words." Yet, like Magdalen Herbert, she possessed the graces of speech, and could use them when occasion demanded. Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Lindsell, Nicholas Ferrar's tutor at Clare Hall, Cambridge, declared that he "knew no woman that passed her in eloquency;" while her religious devotion, "her charity, her constant daily reading Scripture, her singing psalms when she sat at work with her children and maids about her, and hearing them read chapters, and her often reading in the Book of Martyrs," equally excited his admiration. She regularly attended the Church-prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and was computed to have heard twelve thousand sermons, being "addicted that way." Her husband's testimony should not be omitted: "These forty-five years we have lived together, I must say of her, she never gave me cause to be angry with her; so wise and good she is. You all know I was by nature (which God forgive) both quick and choleric and hasty, which she also will forgive." Again, like Herbert's mother, she was beautiful in old age; at eighty having the clear eyes and fine complexion of eighteen.

Many characteristic stories are told of the childhood of Nicholas, their third son, whose career

seems to have been foreshadowed almost from his birth. Though inclined to "aguish distempers from his infancy," he is described by his brother John as "a lovely child, fair and of bright hair like his mother;" while another writer says that he was "noted for an active nimble youth, and graceful in all his motions." He loved books from the first, especially the Bible, "the book in the world to him dear and precious;" his next favourite was *The Book of Martyrs*, the account in which of the burning of Robert Ferrar, Bishop of St. David's, at Carmarthen in 1555, he learned by heart, "as for his name's sake," though there appears to have been no relationship between them. His memory was great: at six or eight years old he had "got all the Psalms without book:" and he then applied himself to the *English Chronicle*, which, together with Foxe's tragic memorials, he would read while his companions were at play, often neglecting his meals and sleep to finish the narrative on which he was engaged. Even then he "fancied being a clergyman," and amused his elders by a solemn request to his mother "that whatever his brothers wore, he might wear no lace, but only plain clean banns [bands], for he was resolved to be a clergyman." At about the age of five years he was confirmed by the Bishop of London, and, by returning again with his other



NICHOLAS FERRAR

FROM THE PAINTING IN MAGDALEN COLLEGE LODGE, CAMBRIDGE

school companions, succeeded in twice receiving the episcopal laying on of hands. To the surprised question of his schoolmaster, "Why did you so?" he replied cheerfully, "I did it because it was a good thing to have the Bishop's prayers and blessing twice, and I have got it."

Like most men who have founded religious societies before and since his time, he had very early his visions of sin, and his grievous and sore temptations. One frosty night, beset with doubt "Whether there was a God, and how to be served," he rose from his bed, and, going down to a grass-plot in the garden, threw himself on his face on the ground; where, says his brother John, "with extreme perplexity of grief, sobs, sighs, and abundance of tears," he earnestly entreated of God that "He would put into his heart the true fear and care of His Divine Majesty, and that this fear and love of God might never depart out of his mind, and that he might know how he must serve Him." After this, and more bitter weeping, his heart was eased and comforted; he returned to his bed, and, although he "could not sleep but little, yet he found daily more and more confirmation in his soul, and so had all his lifetime after a more than ordinary fear of God in him, and His presence, which continued in him to his dying day."

In his thirteenth year he was sent to the University of Cambridge, and entered his college, then known as Clare Hall, as a pensioner: "But soon after the Fellows would needs have him fellow commoner, that he might be their companion;" and in 1610, having performed his Acts *in scholis publicis* with distinguished success, he was made Bachelor of Arts, and in a short time himself elected a Fellow of the College. Here his great memory and abilities, his studious habits, his attention to religious duties, and his practical wisdom in affairs, joined to attractive personal qualities, won him high regard; but like Herbert he suffered from agues, and three years after (in 1613) was obliged by the state of his health to travel abroad. A place was secured for him in the household of the Princess Elizabeth, then lately married to Frederick the Elector Palatine; and on the 23rd of April he sailed with the royal suite from Margate, the poet Quarles being also one of the company. In his study at college a remarkable paper was found three days after his departure, evidently written under a strong sense of the possible dangers before him, and urging his parents in the case of his death not to grieve unduly. The postscript foreshadows his later love and care for the members of his family. "My dearest brothers and sisters," it runs, "if I live you shall find me a

faithful, loving brother unto you all; if I die, I beseech you by the fear of God, by the duty to our parents, by the bond of nature, by the love you bear me, that you all agree in perfect love and amity." He did not, however, remain long in the service of the Princess; giving up his post before her arrival in the Palatinate, and thenceforward continuing his travels alone.

For the next five years he lived abroad; he visited many of the large Continental cities, Rome among them, studying at the Universities of Leipsic and Padua, and acquiring the Dutch, Italian, French and Spanish languages, and also some of the Oriental tongues. In the year 1618, at the age of twenty-five, he returned to England, having learned that his father's affairs were involved in serious difficulties, and proceeded at once to their arrangement. Soon after his return he became connected with the famous and historical Virginia Company, of which his father was a shareholder; his brother John being a member of the council, and his later friend, Sir Edwin Sandys, the governor. The story of his services to that great society for the colonisation, and—thanks to the strong religious feelings of many of its members—the Christianising of the new world, is too long for narration. Almost at once the Company became involved in a struggle with King James,

who, with his inveterate habit of meddling with things beyond his powers or comprehension, had decided to take its affairs into his own hands. This he did in 1624, with the announcement that "he would make it one of his masterpieces;" "But God knows," says John Ferrar, with righteous indignation, "these were but fair words, as the event showed, for all was let loose to go to six and seven, as the proverb is." Nicholas Ferrar had become a member of Parliament (for Lymington) in that year, and vigorously exerted himself to promote the interests of the Company, being often chosen by its committee to make their report to the House, "all of which he performed so well and so pleasingly that there was great notice taken of him." Nevertheless, "the Colony languished, and the most flourishing plantation in the world was almost blasted under new lords and new laws."

The lives of Nicholas Ferrar and of George Herbert show a curious parallel in the manner in which their earlier religious purposes were finally realised, after years of seeming abandonment. Both were driven into "sacred orders" by the frustration of secular though worthy ambitions: had the poet gained his coveted office of Secretary of State, or had the energetic deputy of the Virginia Company been allowed to see the

fruit of his labours in a prosperous Christian colony, with himself as its head, or at least its guiding spirit, their destinies might have been otherwise recorded. Nicholas Ferrar, however, seems to have thrown aside his political schemes without any of the inward struggles that marked Herbert's relinquishment of his Court career. His decision once made was fixed unalterably: he refused a lectureship at Gresham College, and the offer of a rich wife, described as "a very agreeable person;" alleging in the one case "other intentions and aims," and in the other his resolution not to marry at all.

The immediate occasion if not cause of the Ferrars' retirement into the country, seems to have been the great Plague of 1625. It was a time of profound depression and gloom; in London 4,000 deaths had taken place in a single week; and all who could were flying from the pest-ridden city. Mrs. Ferrar, whose husband, the elder Nicholas, had died five years before, had lately purchased the "lordship" of an almost depopulated parish in Huntingdonshire, so obscure and unknown, says Dr. Jebb, another of Ferrar's biographers, "it scarce had any name in our most accurate maps, till the fame of the holy life he lived in that place made the name of Little Gidding sound high in England." The air was good;

but the large manor-house was scarcely habitable ("no better than all ruinated"), and the whole domain lay in pasture, cared for only by shepherds. To this remote "quarantine" Nicholas Ferrar had sent his brother John, the remains of whose broken estate he had been able to save as well as their father's, to prepare it for the abode of the household. Mrs. Ferrar and other members of the family had found shelter at Bourne in Cambridgeshire, in the house of her son-in-law, a country gentleman by the name of Collett; but, longing to see her son Nicholas, who had remained behind in the city to arrange their affairs, she refused to wait till the danger of possible infection had passed, and came on to Little Gidding to see him. "Their greeting was like that of old Jacob and his son Joseph, after his father had given him over for lost." Her son "prayed her to enter the rude house and to repose herself after her journey: 'Not so,' said she, 'yonder I see the Church; let us first go thither, to give God thanks that He has brought me to this good place and has restored me to my son.' It was told her there was no getting into it, for as yet there had not been time to empty the hay that was in it, which was intended shortly to be done." The Church, it should be said, had been, turned into a "hay-barn and a hog-sty:" "But this good woman had

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somewhat of Augustine's mother Monnica in her devotion, of whom that Father affirms that 'if a dragon stood between her and the altar, she would have stepped through him to advance thither.'" She thrust herself a little way into the defiled sanctuary, and "kneeled and prayed and wept there about a quarter of an hour:" then, charging her son "to send instantly for all the workmen about the house," she "commanded them to fling out all the hay at the Church windows, and to cleanse it as well as they could for the present." This was done; and on the following day "orders were given for the Church to be well washed and swept, and workmen were presently employed in its reparations."

Thus, in a time of stress and sorrow, the foundations of the "Protestant Nunnery" of Little Gidding were laid. Evidently Mrs. Ferrar had no small share in its establishment. "A month being overpast, and no danger appearing of infection by her son's coming out of the fatal city, she sent for her children and grandchildren and other her dear relations from Bourne, that they all might live and serve God together at this their new purchase. Seating themselves there, it required much cost and time to repair the old crazy house, and make it a convenient habitation for a religious and numerous family (consisting of above

forty persons), of whom above half were so descended from the old gentlewoman that they kneeled to her morning and evening for her blessing. Then Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, who was as it were the soul that inspirited the whole family with piety, began to bring all their affairs both spiritual and temporal into as good order as could be expected, and as the sadness of the time did either permit or exact of them ; the Church being now made fit for use, and in those additions of structure or ornament which were made to the Church, there were none of the family that had not a hand, and they that through absence could not do it themselves, had a stone laid by some other hands."

A part of his new ordering of their affairs was the daily reading of the Litany in the repaired Church ; the Bishop of the diocese (Williams of Lincoln) having given him his licence, and continued it after the abatement of the Plague. The vicar of the adjoining parish of Steeple Gidding gladly assisted them, and, "like a true spiritual guide, walked with his own flock after him to officiate at that Church." "Thus they began already to taste the delicious fruits of peace and quietness, and they found by this little experience how much the pleasant solitariness of the place (for their family was in a manner all the parish)

contributed to the serenity of their thoughts and the piety of their devotions. At this rate they spun out that part of the unhealthy summer, and all the long winter at Gidding."

In due course Nicholas Ferrar came "to a full determination of entering into that religious course of life which he had so long and so ardently thirsted after." On Trinity Sunday, the 11th June, 1626, he was ordained deacon in Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster Abbey, by Bishop Laud, whose joy "that he was to lay his hands on so extraordinary a person" was unbounded. But above the order of deacon he would not go, "for he protested he durst not advance one step higher." On returning, he read to his mother a solemn vow, "written in vellum and signed with his own hand," that "he would now separate himself to serve God in this holy calling, to be the Levite himself in his own house, and to make his own relations, which were many, his cure of souls;" a resolution greeted with joyfulness by all of his kindred there assembled.

Declining several offers of preferment in the Church, from which indeed his refusal of priest's orders had debarred him, he continued the labours of his cure. His mother, as at first, took a leading part in the work. Having arranged their

affairs in London, and bidden a final farewell to their friends of the great world, "they all returned to their Little Gidding, where the first thing old Mrs. Ferrar did was to beautify the Church. . . . So she contrived to have it wainscotted and the floor neatly boarded (as it still continues); and this was done not only for cleanliness but warmth, since they resolved to spend so much of their time in it. She adorned the Communion Table with carpets of blue silk embroidered with gold; the pulpit and the reading-desk were hung with fine cloth of the same colour, richly laced and fringed with vallans [valance] about each of them. She covered the floor upon which the Altar was raised with sky-coloured silk, the benches round the chancel with blue taffety; and all the rest was suitable and very noble. But these were ornaments only for Sundays and holy days; there were carpets of tapestry and green cloth for the week-days." A brass font was set up, "and a large eagle of the same to hold a fair Bible. She thought the house of God the only place on which such costly furniture was not ill-bestowed; and in this her son not only approved but animated her devotion." Although once spoken of above as an altar, the Communion Table is elsewhere expressly described as placed lengthwise in the chancel.

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The Church being ready and adorned, their next care was to provide a school, for which they "dispigeoned" an old dove-house on the premises; turning it into "a handsome school-house, where not only their own children were trained up, but those of other parishes upon the request of their parents had liberty to come; where they might learn virtue as well as grammar, music, and arithmetic, together with fair writing." Convenient lodgings were provided for the scholars as well as the "three several masters" engaged for their instruction: his own (Nicholas Ferrar's) being "so in the midst of the house that he could see and hear good order observed." For all his nieces and female relations, "according to their ages and conditions," he provided "chambers, closets, gardens, and walks of pleasure." He provided also an infirmary for the sick, as well as rules and times for the family recreations, "with places for running and vaulting, and shooting at butts with bows and arrows." "The habit of the young women, nine or ten or more of them, was black stuff, all of one grave fashion always the same, with comely veils on their heads. . . . They were curious at their needles, and they made their scissors to serve [either] the altar or the poor. They were fine surgeons, and they kept by them all manner of salves and oils and balsams: a

room they had on purpose to lock up these and cordial waters of their own distilling. None of them were nice of dressing with their own hands poor people's wounds, were they never so offensive; but as for prescribing physic, their uncle understood it well himself, yet he never practised it, and he forbid them to tamper or meddle with it." With these material aids, the wise virgins of the household were "expert and ready to administer good counsels, prayers, and comforts to their patients for their souls' health. To take off the burden from his aged mother's shoulders, her son ordered his four nieces to be the managers, yet so as it might prove a burden to none of them . . . he contrived that every sister should be sole governess but one month in four, and then Mary's better part was not to be taken away from her who acted the part of their Martha." The rule of this temporary housekeeper was absolute; every farthing of the weekly expenses was put down; and at the end of the month or year the books were carefully scrutinised. "This made his nieces, several of whom resolved to marry, not only perfect accountants but good housewives too. The land was all let out in parcels to their tenants, who by agreement were to serve the house with some provisions at constant rates. Their diet was neat and frugal, yet

with variety enough accommodated to every one's health and constitution."

The persons thus gathered together for good works under the guidance of Nicholas Ferrar appear to have consisted of his mother, old Mrs. Ferrar; his elder brother John and his wife, with their son, yet another Nicholas; and an infant daughter born at Gidding and called Virginia, in memory of their beloved American plantation; his sister, Susannah Collett and her husband, Mr. Collett of Bourne, with their sixteen children. Mr. Collett, who, to say truth, seems to have been completely under the dominance of his energetic wife and her brother, does not figure largely in the narrative. On the other hand, his children, among them Ferrar Collett, who with his cousin, the youngest Nicholas, followed closely in their uncle's footsteps, and the two "maiden sisters," Mary and Anna, with another daughter who married a clergyman named Mapletoft, are of no small importance. Their servants, in and about the house, were doubtless considerable in number, and ere long they had many occasional guests and callers.

Turning to their daily life, all accounts agree as to its carefully planned and scrupulously followed routine. Their Sundays, naturally differed from the week-days, "being the first and best

day of the week;" but they rose, as on other days, at about five o'clock in winter, and four in summer, old Mrs. Ferrar with them. Then, after private thanksgivings in their rooms, which were fitted "for that intent," "they resort into a large great chamber fairly hung, where in winter before that hour is a good warm fire made by a servant . . . there they always found Nicholas Ferrar ready to attend their coming." To him the daughters and younger children repeated, as they had also done on week-days, "such chapters and psalms as each were to give an account of without book. Then they retired themselves, and this day made their selves all more comely in their best attires, he persuading all sorts to be decent, neat, cleanly in their apparel, as a thing well-pleasing to God and man."

At nine o'clock the bell rang for prayers in the Church, which stood about forty paces from the house, at the end of the garden. The household then reassembled in the great chamber, "there was a hymn sung, and the organs played to it . . . each person said some sentence of Scripture . . . and so all went down to Church . . . in decent order, two and two together, the three masters in gowns leading the way, and the young youths in black gowns following them. Nicholas Ferrar led his mother, his two brothers, John

Ferrar and Mr. Collett, going before her (after the children), and then followed their sister Collett and her daughters, and so all the servants, two by two: each as they came into the Church making low obeisance. . . . Nicholas Ferrar being in his surplice and hood (for so in it he always went to Church) stepped up into the reading-place, and there said divine service, and responses were made by all present, and the reading psalms were done so."

Thus Morning Prayers were said. Afterwards, in the summer "in a gallery, in winter in a room where a good fire was," forty or fifty children from the neighbouring parishes repeated "without book their psalms," receiving a penny for each psalm perfectly said; some carrying away "groats apiece or more" as well as an intimate knowledge of the Psalter. At half-past ten all went again to the Church, where, after Nicholas Ferrar had read the second service, the minister of the next parish preached a sermon. At noon the "psalm-children" dined, standing at long movable trestles, "the old gentlewoman setting the first dish upon the table." Then the family dined in the great dining-room; the meal being preceded by a hymn sung to the organs, and improved by Scripture reading by the younger sort. After dinner there was liberty for walking in orchard and garden, or

retiring to private rooms: at two all went to a sermon at the neighbouring Church of Steeple Gidding; then followed Psalm-saying in the great chamber, and another stage of respite. At six in winter and five in summer, supper was brought into the great parlour, again to vocal and instrumental music: Bible-reading, followed by a story from *The Book of Martyrs*, accompanied the repast; and then there was liberty till the eight o'clock bell summoned them to the great chamber, to hymns, organs, and prayers, and to the beautiful and patriarchal ceremony of blessing by the mother and grandmother of the flock. "So all bid each good night, and to their several apartments each went, the younger sort to bed, and the elder were in their chamber or closets till they went to bed; for it was an order that none must after prayers go up and down, but keep in their chambers."

Special care was taken to avoid unnecessary work on Sundays, the preparing of meals being arranged so as not to cause absences from Church; and at the monthly Communions, on the first Sunday of each month, the servants stood at the lower end of the table, and dined with the family.

The week-day life was equally strict, it might seem equally Sabbatical; there was the same regularity of religious exercises, though they dif-

fered somewhat from the Sunday's routine; but now secular study and work were introduced and followed diligently. After breakfast the young children, and the youths with their masters, retired to the school-room in the dispigeoned dove-house; and "others, as young or old, and such as were too young to go to school," gathered about old Mrs. Ferrar's chair, and sat there in silence, "either at their book or otherwise; and the others, some to their needleworks, others to learn what they were to say next day." Each hour had its employment: "the making the 'Concordance,' their singing, their playing on their instruments, their writing, ciphering; and so never idle. And for variety of employments, Nicholas Ferrar entertained a bookbinder's daughter of Cambridge, to learn of her the skill and art of bookbinding and gilding, and grew very expert at it, as the King, having received books of her [their?] binding, said 'he never saw the like for workmanship.'" Their meals on week-days were enlivened by lighter secular readings; it having been agreed "that something delightful and easy, as stories of sea-voyages, descriptions of foreign countries and accounts of revolutions that happened in them, should be reserved for a time when men do not willingly admit of any very serious and deep speculations."

The most noteworthy examples of their bookbinding were the *Concordances* or *Harmonies* of the Gospels already mentioned, and other *Concordances* to the Holy Scriptures ; the first of them, a *Harmony of the Four Gospels*, having been prepared under the direction of Nicholas Ferrar for their own use, and so arranged that the four books could be read separately or in one continuous narrative, "the printed text being cut out and pasted on large sheets of paper, and every page illustrated with engravings." So "artificially" was the work done that it resembled a new kind of printing ; and the fame of it reaching the ears of King Charles led to their preparing other similar books—a second *Harmony of the Gospels*, a *Harmony of the Books of Kings and Chronicles*, and *The Monotessaron*, or the *Four Evangelists* in English, Latin, French, and Italian—for himself and his son, Charles Prince of Wales, both of whom eventually visited their house. These and other specimens of their workmanship, all of them remarkable for the exquisite neatness of the text and the richness and beauty of the binding, are still preserved in museums and private collections.

The first of these *Harmonies*, that designed for their own use, was connected with the scheme of daily worship observed by the family ; the different members of which repeated the "heads" or

"chapters" hourly throughout the day, together with some of the Psalms, largely it appears from memory. By this plan, the whole of the Gospels were said over once a month, or twelve times a year, and the whole Book of Psalms once every day, or rather every day and night, for the system by which the Psalms were recited, included a considerable night vigil. The account of the Psalms is not quite clear. John Ferrar affirms that "each hour of the day had certain Psalms to be said," as well as a portion of the Gospels, the order of repetition beginning at six in the morning; but he asserts again with equal clearness that in the night watches or vigils, which lasted from nine o'clock in the evening to an hour after midnight, it was arranged that "the two that watched should carefully and distinctly say all David's Psalms over in those four hours' time . . . having both a glass and the clocks to let them know how the night passed away." This would mean that some of the Psalms were repeated twice; but Walton's statement, that in the night vigil they said only "the Psalms that had not been read in the day," may offer the true explanation. The two watchers said the verses alternately, antiphon-wise, kneeling the while; and at one o'clock they aroused Nicholas Ferrar, who continued the vigil by "prayer and medita-

tion," though not it appears by a formal order of religious offices, until six o'clock. It seems to have been this hourly, though not continuous, round of services—these "promiscuous private prayers all the night long by nightly turns, just like as the English nuns at Saint Omers and other Popish places"—that chiefly excited the anger of the more bigoted Puritans of the day, and led to the breaking up of the household in the Civil War.

A religious retreat and oratory; a school of learning and manners, and of training in domestic duties and manual crafts; a hospital, dispensary, and almshouse—above all a place of cheerfulness and calm content, strictly ordered but adorned by art and sweetened by music—Little Gidding has always appealed strongly to the imagination of the outside world; moving some minds, like De Quincey's, to admiration, and others, like Carlyle's, to contempt. Among its kind it was, and perhaps ever will be, unique. No vows were required; service was given voluntarily; marriage was encouraged rather than otherwise; and no further austerities seem to have been exacted than compliance with the daily round of devotional offices and secular tasks—warm fires in winter are repeatedly mentioned, and "baked puddings" figured in the frugal but "neat" and varied

dietary. The story of Little Gidding, however, from its dramatic foundation to the royal visits, the plundering of the house and Church by the Parliamentary soldiers, and the gradual thinning and final dispersal of its inmates by death, removal, and other causes, has been fully set forth by many hands; and here only the relations of its founder with the subject of this memoir need be considered. Each seems to have strongly influenced the other. George Herbert was one of the "religious, grave, learned divines" who advised Nicholas Ferrar to adopt and continue his daily circle of devotions; and Ferrar, as we have seen, persuaded Herbert to re-edify Leighton Church; while again, the poet so valued the friendship of his spiritual brother that he wished to exchange his parish at Bemerton for one near Gidding, valuing "Mr. Ferrar's near neighbourhood more than any living." Ferrar also submitted his three translations of Valdesso, Lessius, and Carbo to Herbert, who supplied a Preface and Notes to the *Divine Considerations* of the first-named writer; while, finally, the poet when dying entrusted his manuscript of *The Temple* unreservedly to Ferrar's hands, to be published or destroyed as he might think fit, his own profound humility forbidding him to pass judgment on its merits.

Among the many visitors to the "Protestant Nunnery"[1]—zealous Puritans, scandalised by the revival of monasticism in the purged and regenerated England of their day, and thoughtful students from Cambridge, attracted by its fame as a quiet and ordered devotional retreat—was the enthusiastic Crashaw, the religious poet of the age who may be regarded as the direct opposite of Herbert in temperament. Himself a Fellow of one of the Cambridge colleges (Peterhouse), much of his time, as described in a familiar passage, was spent in "St. Marie's Church near St. Peter's College," where he "lodged under Tertullian's roof of angels," and "like a primitive saint . . . offered more prayers in the night than others in the day;" his admiration for Herbert's poems suggesting, no doubt, the title of his own *Steps to the Temple.* As already pointed out, he belonged to a later phase of the religious history of the time; and his ejectment from his Fellowship by the Parliamentarians was followed by his reception into the Roman Catholic Church, and by his death as a Canon of Loretto in or about 1650. At Little Gidding he could hardly fail to have been a welcome guest.

[1] One of the curious visitors to Gidding described the family as "orthodox, regular, puritan protestants."

CHAPTER XII

BEMERTON: THE PARSON IN HIS CURE

ABOUT three months after the marriage of George Herbert to Jane Danvers, Philip Earl of Pembroke (William being lately dead) requested King Charles to bestow the Rectory of Fugglestone with Bemerton upon his gifted kinsman, the king replying: "Most willingly to Mr. Herbert, if it be worth his acceptance." But the suddenness of the unsought presentation, and a sense of the responsibility its acceptance would involve, threw the hyper-sensitive poet into an agony of doubt as to his fitness for the vocation. He fasted, prayed, and considered for a whole month, undecided whether to persevere in his "resolution for the clergy," or to decline both the priesthood and the living, suffering meanwhile "such spiritual conflicts as none can think, but only those that have endured them."

At this time he was visited at Bainton, where he was staying with his wife's friends and relations, by his old helper, the benevolent London gold-

smith, Arthur Woodnot (or Woodnoth), who was delighted to find him happily married and seemingly restored to health. From Bainton, after some days of rejoicing, they journeyed to the seat of the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton, near Bemerton, in the same county; King Charles, with the earl and the whole Court, being there or at Salisbury, a few miles distant. It was at this time apparently that the poet made his final decision, if, indeed, it was not made for him. In thanking the earl, he explained his reasons for hesitating to accept the gift; but that night his kinsman informed Bishop Laud, who was one of the guests, of his disturbed state of mind, with the result that the waverer was convinced that his refusal of the living was sinful. A tailor was summoned from Salisbury to take his measure: and the next day, habited in his new canonical clothes, he carried his presentation to the bishop of the diocese, Dr. Davenant, who, as he was already a deacon, gave him immediate institution, and inducted him (26th April, 1630) "into the good and more pleasant than healthful parsonage of Bemerton, which is a mile from Salisbury."

Here it may be said that Laud, although only Bishop of London at the time (he was not raised to Canterbury until 1633, the year of Herbert's death), was already high in the king's favour, and

virtually primate of the realm. Dr. Davenant, a Calvinist of King James's appointing, was Bishop of Salisbury from 1621 to 1641. "A man in whom piety and sound learning were united to a degree perhaps rarely excelled," he was otherwise distinguished as the uncle of the inimitable Thomas Fuller, but less meritoriously as an unmarried prelate whose "batchellor's bounty," unlike Dean Nevile's, was chiefly bestowed in "dignities, prebends, or livings" to his large kindred.

The story of Herbert's induction is well known. Shut into the church to toll the bell, as required by law on such occasions, he remained so long that his friends, growing anxious, looked in at the window, and saw him prostrate on the ground before the altar, engaged as he afterwards told them in framing rules for his life as a parish priest. His decision now finally made, he spoke freely of his past and of his future aims. The night after his induction he said to Mr. Woodnot:—

"I now look back upon my aspiring thoughts, and think myself more happy than if I had attained what then I so ambitiously thirsted for: and I can now behold the Court with an impartial eye, and see plainly that it is made up of fraud, and titles, and flattery, and many other such empty, imaginary, painted pleasures—pleasures that are so empty as not to satisfy when they

are enjoyed. But in God and His service is a fulness of all joy and pleasure, and no satiety. And I will now use all my endeavours to bring my relations and dependants to a love and reliance on Him who never fails those that trust Him. But above all I will be sure to live well, because the virtuous life of a clergyman is the most powerful eloquence to persuade all that see it to reverence and love, and at least to desire to live like Him. And this I will do, because I know that we live in an age that hath more need of good examples than precepts. And I beseech that God Who hath honoured me so much as to call me to serve Him at His Altar, that as by His special grace He hath put into my heart these good desires and resolutions; so He will by His assisting grace give me ghostly strength to bring the same to good effect. And I beseech Him that my humble and charitable life may so win upon others as to bring glory to my Jesus, whom I have this day taken to be my Master and Governor: and I am so proud of His service that I will always observe, and obey, and do His will, and always call Him 'Jesus, my Master;' and I will always contemn my birth, or any title or dignity that can be conferred upon me, when I shall compare them with my title of being a Priest, and serving at the Altar of Jesus my Master."

Three days after this memorable ceremony, and the change of "his sword and silk clothes into a canonical coat," he returned thus attired with his friend Mr. Woodnot to Bainton; and having saluted his wife, affectionately it is to be hoped, said to her: "You are now a minister's wife, and must now so far forget your father's house as not to claim a precedence of any of your parishioners: for you are to know that a Priest's wife can challenge no precedence or place but that which she purchases by her obliging humility: and I am sure places so purchased do best become them. And let me tell you that I am so good a herald as to assure you that this is truth." But his wife, we are told, was so meek herself as to assure him "it was no vexing news to her, and that he should see her observe it with a cheerful willingness."

It is characteristic of the time that, as at Leighton and Little Gidding, the Church fabric and properties had been grossly neglected and were in a ruinous state; owing partly no doubt to the non-residence of the former rector. It is equally characteristic of George Herbert that he at once set himself to the task of repairing them. Leaving his wife at Bainton, he soon returned to his parish, "to view the Church and repair the chancel, and, indeed, to rebuild almost three parts of his house, which was fallen down or decayed." He also

appears to have repaired the Church at Fuggle-stone, about a mile distant; this being properly the Parish Church, to which Bemerton was merely a chapel-of-ease. The ecclesiastical buildings—both, as all pilgrims to the Herbert shrines know, tiny structures on the high-road between Salisbury and Wilton—received his first care: the parsonage, also "at his own great charge," was then made ready for himself and his like-spirited wife. "And having done this good work he caused these verses to be writ upon, or engraved in, the mantel of the chimney in his hall:—

To My Successor.

If thou chance for to find
A new house to thy mind,
And built without thy cost;
Be good to the poor,
As God gives thee store,
And then my labour's not lost."

Having thus "fixed him at Bemerton," Walton proceeds to give an account "of his behaviour both to his parishioners and those many others that knew and conversed with him." As yet, however, he was only a deacon, "and, therefore, longed for the next Ember Week, that he might be ordained priest, and made capable of administering both the Sacraments. At which time the Rev. Humphrey Henchman, now Lord Bishop of London (who does not mention him but with

BEMERTON CHURCH, SHOWING PART OF RECTORY

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some veneration for his life and excellent learning?), tells me he laid his hand on Mr. Herbert's head, and, alas! within less than three years lent his shoulder to carry his dear friend to his grave."

Apparently it was at this time, and in order to "preserve those holy rules which such a priest as he intended to be ought to observe," that Herbert composed what is probably, after *The Temple*, his most important work in English—the "little book called *The Country Parson*; . . . a book so full of plain, prudent, and useful rules," says Walton, "that that country parson that can spare twelve pence and yet wants it is scarce excusable." His life thenceforward was a faithful application of the precepts he thus set down for the guidance of himself and others. His first pulpit labours, as might be expected in a neglected parish where the Churches had been allowed to fall into decay, were of the nature of instruction in the fundamentals of worship and religious life. "The text of his first sermon was taken out of Solomon's Proverbs, and the words were: 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' In which first sermon he gave his parishioners many necessary, holy, safe rules for the discharge of a good conscience both to God and man, and delivered his sermon after a most florid manner, both with great learning and eloquence. But at the close of this sermon, told

them, 'That should not be his constant way of preaching; for since Almighty God does not intend to lead men to heaven by hard questions, he would not therefore fill their heads with unnecessary notions; but that for their sakes his language and his expressions should be more plain and practical in his future sermons.' And he then made it his humble request that they would be constant to the afternoon's service and catechising, and showed them convincing reasons why he desired it; and his obliging example and persuasions brought them to a willing conformity with his desires."

It is clear that he at once abandoned the florid manner—an echo, possibly, of Donne's elaborate discourses to his London congregations, or of his own flights as University Orator—for a much simpler style. Indeed, he seems to have confined himself to explaining the Prayer Book and Church Service, and showing his rustic flock the sweet reasonableness of the Anglican ritual. "The texts for all his future sermons (which God knows were not many) were constantly taken out of the Gospel for the day; and he did as constantly declare why the Church did appoint that portion of Scripture to be that day read, and in what manner the collect for every Sunday does refer to the Gospel or to the Epistle then read to them;

and, that they might pray with understanding, he did usually take occasion to explain, not only the collect for every particular Sunday, but the reasons of all the other collects and responses in our Church Service; and made it appear to them that the whole service of the Church was a reasonable and therefore an acceptable sacrifice to God."

Thus, with minute thoroughness, he went over the whole scheme of public worship as prescribed by authority: prayers, creeds, and confessions, versicles and responses, psalms, lauds, and thanksgivings, with the various offices for different occasions—in short, the whole sequence of daily, weekly, and yearly devotion, as set forth in the English formularies. He was himself a diligent catechist on Sunday afternoons, "after his second lesson, and in the pulpit," never exceeding half an hour, and always "so happy as to have an obedient and a full congregation." The Puritan preachers who "slubbered" over the prayers in their haste to begin their sermons, were sharply rebuked by his practice as well as precepts. "If he were at any time too zealous in his sermons, it was in reproving the indecencies of the people's behaviour in the time of Divine service, and of those ministers that huddled up the Church prayers without a visible reverence and affection, namely, such as seemed to say the Lord's Prayer or collect

in a breath; but for himself, his custom was to stop betwixt every collect, and give the people time to consider what they had prayed, and to force their desires affectionately to God before he engaged them into new petitions."

Having urged a system of daily religious offices upon his friend Ferrar, he was not slow to adopt one for his own household. It was his practice, "strictly at the canonical hours of ten and four," to appear with his wife and three nieces and his servants at the Church prayers in the little chapel-of-ease opposite the parsonage; and the unwonted custom soon attracted many of his parishioners and gentlemen of the district. Also, "some of the meaner sort of his parish did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's saints' bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and would then return back to their plough." These services at Church, however, were not allowed to interfere with his private devotions, or with the household worship, the short prayers of which were always of a set form, and concluded with the collect for the day or week.

As at Cambridge, his principal recreation was music. He is said to have composed hymns and anthems, which he set to music and sang to his

BEMERTON CHURCH: WEST FRONT

PRESENT TIME

lute or viol; and in spite of his love of retirement, he usually walked twice every week to the Cathedral services at Salisbury, and also took part there at "an appointed private music meeting;" for which innocent practices he appears to have thought it necessary to offer the apology that "religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates and sets rules to it."

If it be true that most of the *Temple* poems were composed at this time, many of their images or illustrations may have been suggested by the quiet rural scenery through which he passed in his walks between the retired parsonage and the ancient Cathedral city. Every foot of the mile or more of nearly level high-road, with its bordering fields, flowers, and hedges, must have become intimately known to him; as his own slender figure, in its dark clerical habit and white bands, could not fail to grow familiar to all who lived or went by the way. But it may be doubted if most of his religious poems were composed at Bemerton. Many of them seem to bear marks of the time of spiritual stress preceding the comparative peace of his beneficed days; and in any case, poetry is the business of a lifetime, and rarely bound to the limits of time or place.

Many parochial adventures, if they may be so called, befell him in these quiet foot journeys.

He was instant in season and out with people of all sorts and conditions, gentlemen and clergymen of the neighbourhood, labourers, and others, most of whom, as the result of their meeting, fell in love with his person if not with his doctrines. The incident of the poor man and his beast is perhaps the most familiar of these encounters. Seeing a carrier whose horse was sinking under his burden, the immaculate parson threw off his canonical coat, and helped him to unload and reload the suffering animal; to the fouling of his clothes and the scandalising of his musical friends at Salisbury, who were shocked that "Mr. George Herbert, who used to be so trim and clean, came into that company so soiled and discomposed." Upon his explaining the cause, and being rebuked by one of the Pharisees of the Cathedral for his "dirty employment," he replied that the omission of his act would have wounded his conscience every time he passed the place: "For if I be bound to pray for all that be in distress," he added, "I am sure I am bound, so far as it is in my power, to practise what I pray for. And though I do not wish for the like occasion every day, yet let me tell you I would not willingly pass one day of my life without comforting a sad soul, or showing mercy; and I praise God for this occasion. And now let us tune our instruments."

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

Another like incident, showing the firm resolve of the courtier-parson to be the friend and helper of the poorest of his flock, was that of the old woman who applied to him at his first visit to Bemerton. She came "with an intent to acquaint him with her necessitous condition, as also with some troubles of her mind: but after she had spoke some few words to him, she was surprised with a fear, and that begot a shortness of breath, so that her spirits and speech failed her." Upon perceiving this, the compassionate parson, after many comfortable and heartening words, took her by the hand, caused her to sit beside him, and, finding that she was of his parish, "told her, 'He would be acquainted with her, and take her into his care.' And having with patience heard and understood her wants (and it is some relief for a poor body to be but heard with patience), he, like a Christian clergyman, comforted her by his meek behaviour and counsel: but because that cost him nothing, he relieved her with money too, and so sent her home with a cheerful heart, praising God and praying for him."

These are pictures of an Arcadian parish; and it is to be feared that the country parson of to-day finds himself obliged to be more circumspect of his bounty if not of his comfortable speeches; but the newly beneficed priest, as we have seen

before, was not always soft spoken. Yet he was an adept, says Barnabas Oley, "in the right managing of the fraternal duty of reproof." "There was not a man in his way (be he of what ranke he would) that spoke awry in order to God, but he wiped his mouth with a modest, grave, and Christian reproof . . . his singular dexterity in sweetening this art" being seen (as it certainly is in *The Country Parson*) "in the garb and phrase of his writings."

No picture of the Bemerton life would be complete without the pleasing figure of Mistress Jane Herbert, the "minister's wife," whose surprising readiness to forego her privileges of birth, and to claim no precedence in her husband's parish, except what she might purchase "by her obliging humility," has been mentioned. That she proved an admirable helpmate to the devoted pastor need not be doubted: she became the cheerful and efficient almoner of his charities, a tenth penny of his tithe and a tenth part of his corn and the like, her benefactions usually taking the form of shoes and blankets. The poet's own bounty was unlimited: he would never turn his face from those in want, and even sought out the deserving poor of his flock and relieved them. To the friend who advised him to be more frugal of his gifts, in view of a possible increase of his family, he made

the uncompromising answer: "Sir, my wife hath a competent maintenance secured her after my death, and, therefore, as this is my prayer, so this my resolution shall, by God's grace, be unalterable."

Yet another glimpse of this happy and charitable home and parish life is afforded by Herbert himself in a letter to his brother Henry. Although undated, it was evidently written from Bemerton, probably soon after he had settled in the repaired parsonage with his wife and his two motherless nieces—the daughters of his sister Margaret, who, as mentioned in a former place, had been married to John Vaughan of Llwydiart, in Wales. At the time of the letter, the two elder daughters, Dorothy and Magdalen, seem to have been living with him; and the "third sister" to whom he refers—and who also came into his household, perhaps, after the death of Dorothy — was doubtless Katherine, the youngest. It is always pleasant to read the poet's own words: hence the letter, with its touching note of solicitude for his sister's children, may fitly close the present chapter:—

"Dear Brother,—That you did not only entertain my proposals, but advance them, was lovingly done, and like a good brother. Yet truly it was none of my meaning, when I wrote, to put one of

our nieces into your hands, but barely [merely] what I wrote I meant, and no more; and am glad that although you offer more, yet you will do, as you write, that also. I was desirous to put a good mind into the way of charity, and that was all I intended. For concerning your offer of receiving one, I will tell you what I wrote to our eldest brother when he urged one upon me, and but one, and that at my choice. I wrote to him that I would have both or neither; and upon this ground —because they were to come into an unknown country, tender in knowledge, sense, and age, and knew none but one who could be no company to them; therefore I considered that if one only came, the comfort intended would prove a discomfort. Since that I have seen the fruit of my observation; for they have lived so lovingly, lying, eating, walking, praying, working still together, that I take a comfort therein; and would not have to part them yet, till I take some opportunity to let them know your love, for which both they shall and I do thank you. It is true there is a third sister, whom to receive were the greatest charity of all, for she is youngest and least looked unto; having none to do it but her schoolmistress, and you know what those mercenary creatures are. Neither hath she any to repair unto at good times, as Christmas, etc., which you know is the en-

couragement of learning all the year after, except my cousin Bett take pity of her, which yet at that distance is some difficulty. If you could think of taking her, as once you did, surely it were a great good deed, and I would have her conveyed to you. But I judge you not. Do that which God shall put into your heart, and the Lord bless all your purposes to His glory. Yet truly, if you take her not, I am thinking to do it,[1] even beyond my strength; especially at this time, being more beggarly now than I have been these many years, as having spent two hundred pounds in building; which to me that have nothing yet is very much. But though I both consider this, and your observation also, of the unthankfulness of kindred bred up (which generally is very true), yet I care not; I forget all things, so I may do them good who want it. So I do my part to them, let them think of me what they will or can. I have another Judge, to Whom I stand or fall. If I should regard such things, it were in another's power to defeat my charity, and evil should be stronger than good. But difficulties are so far from cooling Christians, that they whet them. Truly it grieves me to think of the child, how destitute she is, and that in this necessary time of education. For the time of breeding is the time of doing children

[1] He appears finally to have done so (Grosart).

good; and not as many who think they have done fairly if they leave them a good portion after their decease. But take this rule, and it is an outlandish one, which I commend to you as being now a father, 'The best bred child hath the best portion.' Well, the good God bless you more and more, and all yours, and make your family a houseful of God's servants; so prays your ever-loving brother,

"G. HERBERT.

"My wife's and nieces' service.

"To my very dear brother, Sir Henry Herbert, at Court."

CHAPTER XIII

LAST DAYS

THE parsonage of Bemerton stands close to the tiny Chapel, only parted from it by the narrow high-road. At the back, however, the grounds stretch out to the low meadows through which the river Nadder flows on its sluggish way to join the Wiltshire and Hampshire Avon, one of the many less famous Avons of the kingdom. From the "good garden and walkes" which Aubrey, the gossiping antiquarian, says that Herbert "made for the minister," a fair view is had of Salisbury spire, the loftiest and most beautiful in the land; and the music of its chimes—

> Harmonious bells, raising the dead—

comes to the ear now as in his time. "More pleasant than healthful," however, the position may have hastened his end, though the seeds of disease were sown elsewhere. Walton gives no account of his loss of the comparative health he had enjoyed at Bainton; but the change was

doubtless gradual; and the poet, from his reference to the provision made for his wife, was probably under no delusion as to his state.

In the last chapter some of "the excellencies of the active part of his life" have been described; "and thus," says his biographer, "he continued till a consumption so weakened him as to confine him to his house, or to the Chapel which does almost join to it: in which he continued to read prayers constantly twice every day, though he were very weak; in one of which times of his reading his wife observed him to read in pain, and told him so, and that it wasted his spirits and weakened him; and he confessed it did, but said his life could not be better spent than in the service of his Master Jesus, who had done and suffered so much for him. 'But,' said he, 'I will not be wilful; for though my spirit be willing, yet I find my flesh is weak; and, therefore, Mr. Bostock shall be appointed to read prayers for me to-morrow, and I will now be only a hearer of them, till this mortal shall put on immortality.' And Mr. Bostock did the next day undertake and continue this happy employment till Mr. Herbert's death. This Mr. Bostock was a learned and virtuous man, an old friend of Mr. Herbert's, and then his curate to the Church of Fulston [Fugglestone], which is a mile from Bemerton, to which Church

GEORGE HERBERT AT BEMERTON

FROM THE PAINTING BY W. DYCE, R.A., IN THE GUILDHALL GALLERY

Bemerton is but a chapel-of-ease. And this Mr. Bostock did also constantly supply the Church service for Mr. Herbert in that Chapel, when the music meeting at Salisbury caused his absence from it."

"About one month before his death, his friend Mr. Ferrar . . . sent Mr. Edmund Duncon (who is now Rector of Fryer Barnet, in the County of Middlesex) from his house of Gidden Hall, which is near to Huntingdon, to see Mr. Herbert, and to assure him he wanted not his daily prayers for his recovery; and Mr. Duncon was to return back to Gidden with an account of Mr. Herbert's condition. Mr. Duncon found him weak, and at that time lying on his bed or on a pallet; but at his seeing Mr. Duncon he raised himself vigorously, saluted him, and with some earnestness inquired the health of his brother Ferrar, of which Mr. Duncon satisfied him; and after some discourse of Mr. Ferrar's holy life, and the manner of his constant serving God, he said to Mr. Duncon, 'Sir, I see by your habit that you are a priest, and I desire you to pray with me;' which being granted, Mr. Duncon asked him, 'What prayers?' to which Mr. Herbert's answer was, 'Oh, Sir, the prayers of my Mother, the Church of England. No other prayers are equal to them!—but, at this time, I beg of you to pray only the Litany, for I

am weak and faint;' and Mr. Duncon did so. After which, and some other discourse of Mr. Ferrar, Mrs. Herbert provided Mr. Duncon a plain supper and a clean lodging, and he betook himself to rest. This Mr. Duncon tells me; and tells me that at his first view of Mr. Herbert, he saw majesty and humility so reconciled in his looks and behaviour, as begot in him an awful reverence for his person, and says, 'his discourse was so pious, and his motion so genteel and meek, that after almost forty years, yet they remain still fresh in his memory.'"

It is characteristic of Walton that he should insist on the gentility of his hero even in the article of death. Having, however, despatched Mr. Duncon on a five days' journey to Bath, he takes occasion to interpolate an account of Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding ("Gidden" as he calls it) promised by him at an earlier date. In the main his story agrees with that of John Ferrar, from which quotation has already been made. He tells how the accomplished scholar, traveller, and man of business, "having seen the manners and vanities of the world, and found them to be, as Mr. Herbert says, 'a nothing between two dishes' . . . resolved to spend the remainder of his life in mortifications, and in devotion and charity," and the manner in which his

purpose was carried out. He explains that the later intimacy between the two men was a renewal of a "slight acquaintance" formed when they were together at Cambridge, and describes the submitting of Ferrar's translation of Valdesso's *Considerations* to Herbert's criticism. Then, having brought Mr. Duncon back from Bath, he resumes his pathetic story of the poet's last days.

On returning to Bemerton, the visitor "found Mr. Herbert much weaker than he left him; and therefore their discourse could not be long; but at Mr. Duncon's parting with him, Mr. Herbert spoke to this purpose: 'Sir, I pray you give my brother Ferrar an account of the decaying condition of my body, and tell him I beg him to continue his daily prayers for me; and let him know that I have considered that God only is what He would be; and that I am, by His grace, become now so like Him as to be pleased with what pleaseth Him; and tell him that I do not repine, but am pleased with my want of health; and tell him my heart is fixed on that place where true joy is only to be found; and that I long to be there, and do wait for my appointed change with hope and patience.' Having said this, he did, with so sweet a humility as seemed to exalt him, bow down to Mr. Duncon, and, with a

thoughtful and contented look, say to him : ' Sir, I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Ferrar, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master ; in whose service I have now found perfect freedom : desire him to read it ; and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public : if not, let him burn it ; for I and it are less than the least of God's mercies.' Thus meanly did this humble man think of this excellent book, which now bears the name of *The Temple, or Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations ;* of which Mr. Ferrar would say there was in it the picture of a divine soul in every page ; and that the whole book was such a harmony of holy passions as would enrich the world with pleasure and piety. And it appears to have done so, for there have been more than twenty thousand copies of them sold since the first impression."

In another place an account will be given of the licensing and publishing of the poems ; here, however, it seems best to continue the story of the poet's closing life without break.

About three weeks before his death Mr. Duncon departed, and " his old and dear friend, Mr.

Woodnot, came from London to Bemerton, and never left him till he had seen him draw his last breath, and closed his eyes on his death-bed. In this time of his decay he was often visited and prayed for by all the clergy that lived near to him, especially by his friends the Bishop and Prebendaries of the Cathedral Church in Salisbury, but by none more devoutly than his wife, his three nieces[1] (then a part of his family), and Mr. Woodnot, who were the sad witnesses of his daily decay, to whom he would often speak to this purpose: 'I now look back upon the pleasures of my life past, and see the content I have taken in beauty, in wit, and music, and pleasant conversation, are now all past by me like a dream, or as a shadow that returns not, and are now all become dead to me, or I to them; and I see that as my father and generation hath done before me, so I also shall now suddenly (with Job) make my bed also in the dark; and I praise God I am prepared for it; and I praise Him that I am not to learn patience now I stand in such need of it; and that I have practised mortification, and endeavoured to die daily that I might not die eternally; and my hope is that I shall shortly leave this valley of tears, and be free from all fevers and pain; and, which will be a more happy condition, I shall be free

[1] Only two, Dorothy, the eldest, having died before him.

from sin, and all the temptations and anxieties that attend it; and this being past, I shall dwell in the New Jerusalem—dwell there with men made perfect; dwell where these eyes shall see my Master and Saviour, Jesus, and with Him see my dear mother, and all my relations and friends.[1] But I must die, or not come to that happy place. And this is my content, that I am going daily towards it; and that every day which I live hath taken a part of my appointed time from me; and that I shall live the less time for having lived this and the day past.'"

"These and the like expressions, which he uttered often, may be said to be his enjoyment of heaven before he enjoyed it. The Sunday before his death he rose suddenly from his bed or couch, called for one of his instruments, took it into his hand, and said:—

> My God, my God!
> My music shall find Thee,
> And every string
> Shall have his attribute to sing.

And having tuned it, he played and sung:—

[1] Compare with a prayer of Laud, in his old age: "And after this painful life ended, bring me, I beseech Thee, to Thy joys, to Thy glory, to Thyself: *that I and my parents*, with all Thy saints and servants departed this life, may meet in a blessed resurrection, ever to sing praises and honour to Thee. . . ."

The Sundays of man's life,
  Threaded together on Time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
  Of the eternal glorious King:
On Sundays heaven's door stands ope:
  Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope.

"Thus he sung on earth such hymns and anthems as the angels, and he and Mr. Ferrar now sing in heaven."

Walton goes on to describe, perhaps with unnecessary circumstance, the last moments of the dying poet; about whose bedside his sorrowful wife and nieces, with the faithful Mr. Woodnot, and his curate, Mr. Bostock, were grouped; unwilling "to lose sight of him whom they could not hope to see much longer." Before this, on expressing regret for the smallness of the meritorious deeds of his life, his friend had reminded him of his re-edifying Leighton Church, and his many charitable and merciful acts; to whom he had made the well-known reply: "They be good works if they be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and not otherwise." Now, as they stood about him, "his wife observed him to breathe faintly, and with much trouble; and observed him to fall into a sudden agony, which so surprised her, that she fell into a sudden passion, and required of him to know how he did; to

which his answer was, 'That he had passed a conflict with his last enemy, and had overcome him by the merits of his Master, Jesus.' After which answer, he looked up and saw his wife and nieces weeping to an extremity, and charged them: 'If they loved him, to withdraw into the next room, and there pray every one alone for him; for nothing but their lamentations could make his death uncomfortable.' To which request their sighs and tears would not suffer them to make any reply, but they yielded a sad obedience, leaving only with him Mr. Woodnot and Mr. Bostock. Immediately after they had left him, he said to Mr. Bostock: 'Pray, Sir, open that door; then look into that cabinet, in which you may easily find my last will, and give it into my hand;' which being done, Mr. Herbert delivered it into the hand of Mr. Woodnot, and said: 'My old friend, I here deliver you my last will, in which you will find that I have made you my sole executor for the good of my wife and nieces; and I desire you to show kindness to them, as they shall need it. I do not desire you to be just, for I know you will be so for your own sake; but I charge you by the religion of our friendship to be careful of them.' And having obtained Mr. Woodnot's promise to be so, he said: 'I am now ready to die.' After which

words he said: 'Lord, forsake me not, now my strength faileth me, but grant me mercy for the merits of my Jesus. And now, Lord—Lord, now receive my soul.' And with these words he breathed forth his divine soul without any apparent disturbance, Mr. Woodnot and Mr. Bostock attending his last breath, and closing his eyes."

"Thus he lived, and thus he died like a saint, unspotted of the world, full of alms-deeds, full of humility, and all the examples of a virtuous life; which I cannot conclude better than with this borrowed observation:—

> . . . All must to their cold graves;
> But the religious actions of the just
> Smell sweet in death, and blossom in the dust.

Mr. George Herbert's have done so to this, and will doubtless do so to succeeding generations. I have but this to say more of him, that if Andrew Melvin died before him, then George Herbert died without an enemy. I wish (if God shall be so pleased) that I may be so happy as to die like him.

"Iz. Wa."

Criticisms of these well-known passages would be superfluous, if not impertinent. In much of the language we recognise the phrases of religious orthodoxy accepted and approved by a former

generation, but now discarded ; as our own, if we have any, will be discarded by the generations to come. Yet the passion and elevation of Walton's last tribute to the man whom, having but seen, he loved, have rarely been surpassed, and rank him among the best of those who have used the English tongue as an instrument for expressing the higher and nobler emotions of the soul.

George Herbert's funeral, according to the Bemerton registers, took place on the 3rd of March, 1632, or by our present reckoning, 1633. As he was born on the 3rd of April, 1593, his age was a month short of forty years. He was buried, says Walton, "in his own Church [of Bemerton] under the altar, and covered with a gravestone without any inscription." This agrees with the account given by Aubrey: "He lies in the chancel, under no large nor yet very good marble gravestone, without any inscription. . . . He was buried, according to his own desire, with the singing service for the burial of the dead by the singing men of Sarum. Dr. Sambroke (attorney) then assisted as a choir boy ; my uncle, Th. Danvers, was at the funeral." His wife long survived him. By his will he left her all his "goods both within doors and without doors, both monies and books and household stuff," saving certain legacies to the poor, his servants,

BEMERTON CHURCH : INTERIOR

SHOWING ALTAR, UNDER WHICH HERBERT WAS BURIED

his executor (Mr. Woodnot), and others. The story of her remaining life is briefly and somewhat quaintly told by Walton :—

"She continued his disconsolate widow about six years, bemoaning herself, and complaining that she had lost the delight of her eyes; but more, that she had lost the spiritual guide for her poor soul; and would often say, 'Oh, that I had, like holy Mary, the mother of Jesus, treasured up all his sayings in my heart! but since I have not been able to do that, I will labour to live like him, that where he now is, I may be also.' And she would often say (as the prophet David for his son Absalom), 'O that I had died for him!' Thus she continued mourning, till time and conversation had so moderated her sorrows that she became the happy wife of Sir Robert Cook, of Highnam, in the county of Gloucester, Knt.; and though he put a high value on the excellent accomplishments of her mind and body, and was so like Mr. Herbert as not to govern like a master, but as an affectionate husband; yet she would, even to him, often take occasion to mention the name of Mr. George Herbert, and say, 'That name must live in her memory till she put off mortality.'"

"By Sir Robert she had only one child, a daughter, whose parts and plentiful estate make

her happy in this world, and her well using of them gives a fair testimony that she will be so in that which is to come."

"Mrs. Herbert was the wife of Sir Robert eight years, and lived his widow about fifteen ; all which time she took a pleasure in mentioning and commending the excellencies of Mr. George Herbert. She died in the year 1663 [other writers say 1656], and lies buried at Highnam. . . ."

"This Lady Cook had preserved many of Mr. Herbert's private writings, which she intended to make public ; but they and Highnam House were burnt together by the late rebels, and so lost to posterity." In another and earlier edition of the *Life* the words are added: "and by them was also burnt or destroyed a choice library which Mr. Herbert had fastened with chains in a fit room in Montgomery Castle, being by him dedicated to the succeeding Herberts that should become the owners of it."

The last hours of George Herbert and Nicholas Ferrar have much in common : both were strongly moved by a feeling of revulsion against the vanity and emptiness of the world, "the nothing between two dishes," as Herbert pronounced its most desired pleasures. Whether the dying really see life in its true perspective may be doubted ; or rather it is highly improbable that the moment of mor-

tality gives any inspired vision of its worth and meaning, and especially any power to appraise its literature. Just before his end, Ferrar commanded that his lighter secular books, "three great hampers," which had been locked up for many years, of "comedies, tragedies, love-hymns, heroical poems, novels, and the like," should be burned on the place of his intended burial, a spot seven feet from the west door of the church at Little Gidding. The injunction was promptly obeyed; "the bonfire flaming out upon the hill where the church and house stood," to the astonishment and alarm of the adjacent country, the more superstitious affirming that the papistical deacon "could not die until he had burnt all his conjuring-books." This holocaust of imaginative works, "in several languages, which he in all places had procured with great search, and at no little cost," will of course be condemned by cultured persons; but the act is significant of a stage in the moral history of peoples as of individuals. Our more indulgent philosophers have long since assured us—what, indeed, we never needed to be told—that the imagination requires food not less than other parts of our mental being; and, happily for ourselves, human genius, especially at certain genial periods of man's development, has abundantly supplied that need. But at times the in-

sufficiency of this noble repast for satisfying the soul's ultimate demands is forced upon us; and the loftiest products of the human intellect, which we have as thoughtlessly as thanklessly enjoyed, are rightly consigned to the flames, or at least to the figurative fires necessary for our spiritual purgation.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TEMPLE

I. *THE CHURCH PORCH*

GEORGE HERBERT'S influence on the Church and the world was exerted in a threefold manner: by his religious poems, chiefly those included in *The Temple;* by his rules of living for the parochial and other clergy set forth in *The Country Parson;* and by the far-spread and almost incredible report of his holy life. Compared with these, his merely academical exercises, even the *Epigrams* in defence of his Church against Melville and the "obsequious" *Parentalia*, with his renown as a witty and elegant scholar and a virtuous member of a corrupt Court, counted for little. *The Temple* poems and the tale of his ascetic devotion went hand in hand. Men read the gentle yet powerful exhortation to high thinking and right living in *The Church Porch* with instant approval, and saw in the shorter poems the whole range of their religious experiences faithfully reflected, but height-

ened and harmonised; while the rumour of his charities, and his teaching, preaching, and lowly service in his country cure, cast a halo about his name long before Walton's narrative appeared. This was doubtless magnified by the contrast between his high birth and the humbleness of his elected lot—there was something bordering on the romantic in his laying aside the courtier's gay garments and sword for the sober habit of a country parish priest.

The account of his delivery, with self-effacing gestures, of this first collection of his English poems to his visitor at Bemerton, Mr. Edmund Duncon, with the request that he should submit them to their common friend, Nicholas Ferrar, has already been given. Walton thus continues the history of the precious manuscript :—

"And this ought to be noted, that when Mr. Ferrar sent this book to Cambridge to be licensed for the press, the Vice-Chancellor would by no means allow the two so much noted verses,

> Religion stands a-tiptoe in our land,
> Ready to pass to the American strand,

to be printed; and Mr. Ferrar would by no means allow the book to be printed and want them; but after some time, and some arguments for and against their being made public, the Vice-Chan-

cellor said : 'I knew Mr. Herbert well, and know that he had many heavenly speculations, and was a divine poet ; but I hope the world will not take him to be an inspired prophet, and therefore I license the whole book.' So that it came to be printed without the diminution or addition of a syllable since it was delivered into the hands of Mr. Duncon, save only that Mr. Ferrar hath added that excellent preface that is printed before it."

Thus, not without much official dubiety, as well as hesitation on the part of its author, the little book went forth to the world. It was issued by the University Press, and bore the title: *The Temple. Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations. By Mr. George Herbert. Psal.* 29 : *In his Temple doth every man speak of his honour.* A second edition of the same year added to the author's name, "late Oratour of the Universitie of Cambridge." It appears that an earlier undated edition was printed about three weeks after his death, probably by Ferrar himself at Little Gidding, for private circulation only. After this, editions multiplied apace. There were eight issues before the year 1709 ; and Walton, in his first edition of Herbert's *Life* (1674), asserted, as we have seen, that more than twenty thousand copies had then been sold. Later and modern editions

have been many, and to-day no large anthology of English sacred verse can be called complete without a fair selection of *The Temple* poems; while the works of few writers of religious poetry have received more able and appreciative criticism, or more puzzled disparagement from a certain class of minds.

How is this evident and long-continued popularity to be accounted for? What was there in the seventy-seven stanzas of *The Church Porch*, and in the hundred and sixty following poems, that gave Nicholas Ferrar "the picture of a divine soul in every page," and convinced him that the book, if published, "would enrich the world with pleasure and piety"? What tincture of originality, what beauty of phrase or measure, or what new insight into divine things, prompted the fervour of his reverent introduction, concluded with Herbert's own motto, "Less than the least of God's mercies"? And what vital quality, it may be added, keeps it alive to-day? The questions are easier to ask than to answer; yet they do not seem quite the insoluble enigmas which they appear to have presented to some of the poet's literary commentators in recent times.

It cannot be said that the novelty of the book was its first claim to acceptance. There had been religious poets in England before, and many who

THE TEMPLE.

SACRED POEMS AND PRIVATE EJACULATIONS.

By Mr. GEORGE HERBERT.

PSAL. 29.

In his Temple doth every man ſpeak of his honour.

CAMBRIDGE:
Printed by *Thom. Buck*, and *Roger Daniel*, printers to the Univerſitie.
1633.

THE FIRST EDITION

THE TEMPLE.

SACRED POEMS AND PRIVATE EJACULATIONS.

By Mr. GEORGE HERBERT, late Oratour of the Universitie of *Cambridge*.

The second Edition.

PSAL. 29.
In his Temple doth every man speak of his honour.

1664

William Courten

Printed by *T. Buck*, and *R. Daniel*, printers to the Universitie of *Cambridge*, 1633.

¶ And are to be sold by *Fr. Green*.

were not distinctively religious had written sacred verses. Almost every man in Herbert's age who wrote in rhyme, and nearly every educated man did so, had moments in which he composed devout hymns or lyrics: even the popular dramatists did so at times, when moved by the incidents of the Gospel story, the seasons or offices of the Church, or the more solemn occasions of human life. Bacon, Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, and Ben Jonson, are a few examples among many. Besides these, there was the notable band who were almost exclusively concerned with religious verse in one form or another. Donne's *Divine Poems* had long been circulated in manuscript, and, it is said, were published collectively in the year of Herbert's death. George Wither's *Hymns and Songs of the Church* had appeared ten years before, in 1623. Phineas Fletcher, of King's College, published his curious anatomy of the soul and body of man, *The Purple Island*, in the same year with *The Temple;* and his younger brother Giles (like Herbert a Westminster scholar at Trinity) had dedicated his Miltonic epic, *Christ's Death and Victory*, to the Master, Dean Nevile, several years before. There was, indeed, an abundance of religious verse, some of it of great merit, in the hands of the reading public; but the most popular religious poems of the time

were probably *The Divine Emblems* of Francis Quarles, published in 1635. Following after his *Feast of Worms*, his series of metrical compositions on Bible subjects (*Hadassa*, *Job Militant*, *Sion's Elegies* and *Sion's Sonnets*), and his *History of Samson* and *Divine Fancies*, *The Emblems* sought to interpret the Scripture text by an ingenious allegorical system aided by pictures; and apparently did so with the success that often attends even greatly inferior writings when thus adorned. Crashaw and Vaughan may be considered the spiritual children of George Herbert, as both wrote for a later generation and acknowledged their indebtedness to *The Temple;* the sombre and mystical Vaughan, indeed, was almost a plagiarist in the closeness of his imitation. Herrick's exquisite and genuine vein of religious verse probably never appealed to a large public; but his *Noble Numbers* cannot be ignored as a contribution to the sacred poetry of the age. *The Temple*, therefore, was merely one of many works of its kind, some of them of high poetic value;[1] and its ready acceptance and continuing

[1] The remarkable poems of Thomas Traherne, B.D. (1636?-1674), with their striking resemblance to those of Vaughan and Crashaw, and even stronger suggestion of William Blake, should be added to the volume of seventeenth-century religious verse, although most of them have only lately been rescued from manuscript.

vogue must be explained by something else than novelty of form or substance.

There can be no doubt that the directness of its appeal to the heart and conscience, especially in its long opening poem, *The Church Porch*, made it especially welcome to the more serious minds of the age. The concluding lines of the first stanza, already quoted—

> A verse may find him who a sermon flies,
> And turn delight into a sacrifice—

strike the keynote of the whole: the poem is essentially a sermon in rhyme, and its frankly didactic nature is not concealed, though it may be sweetened, by the verser's art. It is, in fact, a plain man's guide to godliness: and the plain man of the time received it gladly. Dedicated to God, with the shorter poems of the volume—

> Lord, my first fruits present themselves to Thee—

it deals with the elements of moral conduct, and its exhortations are almost platitudes: be chaste, sober, reverent, truthful; avoid idleness, extravagance, greed; do not play the fool, the jester, the braggart, and so on. Its object might be said to be, like that of Spenser's *Faery Queen*, "to fashion a gentleman, or noble person, in virtue and gentle discipline;" and it concerns itself mainly with fundamentals. But *The Church*

Porch has several merits which are not always exhibited by the other *Temple* poems. Unlike most of them, it is singularly free from the verbal and intellectual conceits of the age, whether metaphysical or otherwise; it especially abounds in homely and virile common-sense; and it offers no ambiguities for painful solution. Herbert's practical wisdom in affairs, and his strength in handling the common elements of English speech, are here seen at their best; while no other poem of his contains so much quoted and quotable matter. Hardly a verse is without its familiar lines or phrases. Take at random his plea for temperance :—

> Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame
> When once it is within thee; but before
> Mayst rule it as thou list; and pour the shame,
> Which it would pour on thee, upon the floor.
> It is most just to throw that on the ground
> Which would throw me there, if I kept the round;

or his argument against profanity :—

> Take not His Name, Who made thy mouth, in vain:
> It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
> Lust and wine plead a pleasure; avarice gain;
> But the cheap swearer through his open sluice
> Lets his soul run for nought, as little fearing:
> Were I an epicure, I could bate swearing;

or his well-known advice to those who repeat stories of questionable taste or morality :—

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oaths, which true wit cannot need;
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin;
He pares his apple that will cleanly feed.

Some of his utterances have the force and fire of Marlowe or Shakespeare, as in his plea for truthfulness :—

Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both:
Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
The stormy working soul spits lies and froth.
Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie:
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.

"The stormy working soul spits lies and froth" is a line out of Shakespeare's own mint. So too is this :—

Some till their ground, but let weeds choke their son;

and these :—

Chase brave employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not; for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

But they are equally George Herbert's, with many more of his own coining and impress. Here, in a single stanza, he gives a reasoned defence of that order and method in living upon which he never failed to insist :—

Slight those who say, amidst their sickly healths,
"Thou liv'st by rule." What doth not so but man?
Houses are built by rule, and commonwealths.
Entice the trusty sun, if that you can,
From his ecliptic line—beckon the sky,
Who lives by rule, then, keeps good company.

Here, again, is his familiar and wholesome counsel to the much-companioned man or woman in public or private life, expressed with even more than his usual homeliness :—

> By all means use sometimes to be alone.
> Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.
> Dare to look in thy chest, for 'tis thine own,
> And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
> Who cannot rest till he good fellows find,
> He breaks up house, turns out of doors his mind.

"Never was scraper brave man," "in clothes cheap handsomeness doth bear the bell," "play not for gain, but sport," "laugh not too much : the witty man laughs least," these, and many other instances of his proverbial wisdom, savour as much of the high-minded courtier as of the priest and spiritual guide. They might have been composed while the poet attended the king at Newmarket or Royston ; waiting behind his chair — with Bishop Andrewes perhaps — and observing the motley and bedizened crowd of suitors for the royal favour, as they acted their parts in his presence. But there were brave and honest men among them, whose bearing may have prompted his best words of counsel to those who live and move in the world of public affairs :—

> Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high ;
> So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be ;
> Sink not in spirit : who aimeth at the sky
> Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.

A grain of glory mixed with humbleness
Cures both a fever and lethargicness.

Ere long, however, the country parson speaks in his true voice, and in lines not less familiar. If the former ones may have been written at Court, these bear plainly the stamp of Bemerton; and their deeper spiritual tone is at once noticeable:—

Sundays observe: think when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels' music; therefore come not late.

That the poet of the Church should insist on the importance of attending its regular services is only fitting; but his argument against separatism, though ingenious and quaintly expressed, is not perhaps of the soundest:—

Though private prayer be a brave design,
Yet public hath more promises, more love;
And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.
We all are but cold suitors; let us move
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;
Pray with the most; for where most pray is heaven.

At Leighton Bromswold the pulpit and reading pew were of equal height: here, however, in what are perhaps his best-known lines, prayer receives the higher place:—

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most;
Praying's the end of preaching. O, be drest;
Stay not for the other pin; why, thou hast lost
A joy for it worth worlds. Thus Hell doth jest
Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,
Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

What effect a reversal of the last-named conditions might have had on a well-dressed congregation of the time, he does not pause to consider; but his wise sayings: "Stay not for the other pin," "Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stockings," "All equal are within the Church's gate," and many others, have long since passed into proverbs, together with his generous excuse for the failings of some of his pulpit brethren. Do not grudge, he says,

> To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.
> The worst speak something good; if all want sense,
> God takes the text, and preacheth patience;

and he sums up the teachings of his lengthened homily with the soldier's counsel of perfection :—

> In brief, acquit thee bravely: play the man.

CHAPTER XV

THE TEMPLE

II. THE SHORTER POEMS

IF *The Church Porch* is comparatively free from the metaphysical and other defects commonly charged on the poet, the hundred and sixty shorter pieces to which it serves as an introduction show them in full measure, though perhaps not to the degree that some of his critics maintain. But with his ascent to a higher plane of thought and experience he stumbles frequently, and now and then falls—mountain summits have their perils for sacred as well as other verse writers. His theme is essentially that of Milton and St. Paul: man's first disobedience and its fruits, the Christian Sacrifice, and the elemental travail of the human soul to which they gave birth; but his treatment, as might be expected, is didactic rather than epic. The metaphor suggested by his title is carried on; the portico now passed, the Temple itself is entered :—

> Thou, whom the former precepts have
> Sprinkled, and taught how to behave
> Thyself in Church, approach, and taste
> The Church's mystical repast.
> Avoid profaneness;[1] come not here:
> Nothing but holy, pure, and clear,
> *Or that which groaneth to be so,*
> May at his peril further go.

Though short individually, the poems taken together form a considerable body of verse; and to say that their merit varies is to affirm what is true of the work of almost every writer of force and originality—only mediocrity seems capable of maintaining a uniform level. That Herbert's poetry is seriously marred by the taste of his age, an age that took delight in over-strained metaphors, and an elaborate ingenuity of thought rather than its more simple and obvious processes, is apparent at once; and whether he drew the influence from its leading exponent, Donne, or from the surrounding air, is hardly material, though the fact is to be regretted. Had he been as serenely impervious to the time-spirit in this respect as his contemporary, Herrick, the world would have seen a greater poet; but on the other hand, it might have lost its George Herbert, for the Parable of the Tares is of wide application. The line above quoted, from what might be called

[1] "Avaunt, profaneness!" (Grosart).

the inscription over the Church door: "Or that which groaneth to be so," marks him off from the majority of his fellow-singers even in sacred things; and if by any cause the intensity of his aspiration for holiness had been abated, no mere literary perfection would have atoned for the loss.

The shorter *Temple* poems, within their general scheme, cover a wide range of subjects. They are by no means confined to the symbolism of the Church precincts and furniture, or to its seasons and spiritual offices; on the contrary, the greater number bear the names of abstract, if they may not rather be called concrete, things: five are entitled *Affliction*, three *Praise*, two *Justice*, two *Love*, one *Virtue*, and so on. Many of the titles give as little hint of their character as the names of Ruskin's books: *The Bag*, *The Collar*, *The Pulley*, *The Size*, and others, are examples. Nearly all are composed in a vein of spiritual egotism, if it may be so called, and deal with individual experience. The first person predominates: chiefly it is man speaking with God; but once, in *The Sacrifice*, it is Christ who speaks to man from the Cross; and once, in the *Dialogue*, Christ and man speak to each other alternately; while again elsewhere, men and angels converse together antiphon-wise. In all the poems, however artificial the mechanism may be, the feeling

is strong and genuine—dulness of mind or heart, indeed, is the one thing Herbert abhors, and will not forgive in himself or in others. Like most religious poets of the time, he is deeply moved by the tragedy of the Crucifixion : it is the subject of one of the earliest and longest of the *Temple* pieces —*The Sacrifice* just mentioned—in which Christ Himself is the speaker ; and it is treated with a simplicity that suggests the old miracle plays, yet with the profoundest feeling :—

> O all ye who pass by, whose eyes and mind
> To worldly things are sharp, but to me blind,—
> To me, who took eyes that I might you find ;
> Was ever grief like mine ?

The sixty-three stanzas, all but two ending with the same refrain, recite in sad monody the story of the betrayal, desertion, and other events of the Passion, and are almost wholly free from conceits and kindred blemishes. Unfortunately, in other instances, the solemnity of his theme does not save him from gross lapses of the kind. A species of unpleasant materialism, for realism it cannot be called, infected the theologians of the age, as it infected many in later as well as in earlier times : neither the mystery of the Incarnation nor of the Eucharist was safe from what Wordsworth would have called their fingering habits ; and even poets

fell into the snare. Herbert is not a sinner more than others: he is, indeed, less culpable in this respect than Crashaw; but to our more fastidious, if not better taste, his handling of such momentous topics is often repellent, despite the earnestness of his aim.

But the poetry of *The Temple* is not to be expressed in negations; and if it has everywhere the note of suffering, it also overflows with joy. Where there is music there is gladness; and, with all their defects, its lines are full of music:—

> Let all the world in every corner sing,
> My God and King.
> The heavens are not too high,
> His praise may thither fly;
> The earth is not too low,
> His praises there may grow.
> Let all the world in every corner sing,
> My God and King.

It may be in the higher symmetry of his thoughts that his music chiefly abounds; for, according to Sir Thomas Browne, music exists wherever there is harmony, order, and proportion; and these are distinguishing qualities of Herbert's verse. In the well-known *Elixir*, the magic draught which has sweetened the hardest labours of house and field for many generations, there is music of both kinds, except perhaps in the second and third stanzas:—

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.

Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into an action;
But still to make Thee prepossessed,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heav'n espy.

All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean
Which with his tincture (for Thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

That, with his profound knowledge and experience of spiritual life, he should have dwelt much on the insidious nature of evil, ever clouding the soul's best desires and purposes, and creeping, serpent-like, through the barriers of moral restraint, is entirely in keeping with his character. Two of his shorter poems are entitled *Sin;* and the longer one is unique in its curious blending of

psychological truth with beauty and quaintness of language :—

Lord, with what care hast Thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us; then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers,

Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,

Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,
The sound of glory ringing in our ears;
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.

Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.[1]

It is this martial note, this "sound of glory" ever in his ears, that makes Herbert's poetry so inspiring. However lowly his theme, however dark the Valley of Humiliation through which at the time he walks, he hears the music of the celestial host, and it stirs his soul like a trumpet. To quote, either wholly or in part, his more familiar poems, may seem superfluous; but as a rule they are his best and cannot well be omitted. It is interesting to

[1] Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, p. 193, describes this poem as "equally admirable for the weight, number, and expression of the thoughts, and for the simple dignity of the language:" adding, "unless, indeed, a fastidious taste should object to the latter half of the sixth line" (*viz.*, "anguish of all sizes").

observe how many are conceived in the spirit of the Christian pilgrim : Herbert, in fact, anticipates Bunyan's allegory ; and Vanity Fair, not less than the Slough of Despond, is one of his temptations by the way. He is especially beset with the allurements of what may be called its popular stalls, the delights of the eye and other gauds captivating to the natural man. In the oddly-named *Quip*, Beauty creeps into a rose, and scornfully flouts him when he does not pluck the flower ; Money jingles his full purse at his ear ; and "brave Glory" puffs by in whistling silks ; but, as might be supposed, his most dangerous tempters are "quick Wit and Conversation," who plausibly invite him to make a public speech—a reminiscence, doubtless, of his old academic office. In *The Pulley*, justly ranked as one of his finest poems, the desirable gifts thus personified, and others, are freely granted to mankind, only rest being withheld :—

> When God at first made man,
> Having a glass of blessings standing by,
> Let us, said He, pour on him all we can ;
> Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
> Contract into a span.
>
> So Strength first made a way ;
> Then Beauty flowed, then Wisdom, Honour, Pleasure ;
> When almost all was out, God made a stay,
> Perceiving that alone of all His treasure
> Rest at the bottom lay.

For if I should, said He,
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature:
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

Profoundly philosophical as *The Pulley* is, its seductive seventh line ("Then Beauty flowed, then Wisdom, Honour, Pleasure") classes it, along with *The Pearl* ("I know the ways of Learning," etc.), among what may be called Herbert's Vanity Fair poems; to which his courtier days must have supplied valuable materials. More distinctively suggestive of Bunyan, however, is his own *Pilgrimage*, a metaphysical poem in the best sense, and, although not well known, assuredly one of his best. It is in poems like this, and a few others, that he enters the mystic's peculiar domain, and approaches most nearly to his own greatest disciple, Henry Vaughan. Bunyan, whose only books while imprisoned in Bedford gaol are said to have been the *Bible* and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, probably never read his predecessor's lines, which were published when he was about five years old; but

it is curious to see how closely he follows the story, though not, it must be said, in its ending :—

I travelled on, seeing the hill where lay
My expectation.
A long it was and weary way:
The gloomy cave of Desperation
I left on the one, and on the other side
The rock of Pride.

And so I came to Fancy's meadow, strowed
With many a flower:
Fain would I here have made abode,
But I was quickened by my hour.
So to Care's copse I came, and there got through
With much ado.

That led me to the wild of Passion, which
Some call the wold;
A wasted place, but sometimes rich.
Here I was robbed of all my gold,
Save one good angel, which a friend had tied
Close to my side.

At length I got unto the gladsome hill,
Where lay my hope,
Where lay my heart; and climbing still,
When I had gained the brow and top,
A lake of brackish waters on the ground
Was all I found.

With that, abashed and struck with many a sting
Of swarming fears,
I fell, and cried, "Alas, my King!
Can both the way and end be tears?"
Yet taking heart I rose, and then perceived
I was deceived.

My hill was farther; so I flung away,
Yet heard a cry
Just as I went,—"None goes that way
And lives." "If that be all," said I,
"After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair." (A rest.)

This is, indeed, the Enchanted Ground; and the interpretation of the allegory, or dream, if such it be, is not for the gay pilgrims of the Tabard Inn, who travel in large companies, and repeat light tales by the way for each other's entertainment.

With the exception of *The Church Porch*, the Church fabric poems, if they may be so called, are hardly equal to these. Yet there are lines in the *Church Monuments* which, despite the common defects of tombstone meditations, have all the marks of the great style—the style of Shakespeare and Wordsworth. Desiring his flesh to

. . . take acquaintance of this heap of dust,
To which the blast of Death's incessant motion,
Fed with the exhalation of our crimes,
Drives all at last,

the poet sends his body

. . . to this school, that it may learn
To spell his elements, and find his birth
Written in dusty heraldry and lines,

as others have done, not always unprofitably. The poem entitled *Church Music* ("Sweetest of sweets, I thank you!") naturally strikes a cheer-

fuller note; the *Church Lock and Key* suggests the sins that close the ears of Heaven to mortal suppliants; the materials of *The Church Floor* symbolise certain moral virtues, though as elsewhere,

> Hither sometimes sin steals, and stains
> The marble's neat and curious veins;

but *The Windows* happily lets in purifying light. *The Altar* belongs to the class of artificial poems censured by Addison in his Papers on Wit, in which the lines are made to conform to the shape of material objects: in this case it is an altar or a table, and the verse suffers from the forcing process.

The seasons and offices of the Church should naturally afford a wider scope; but on the whole it cannot be said that Herbert is at his best in dealing with them in verse. His *Sunday* ("O Day most calm, most bright!") probably deserves the highest place. *Easter* begins with promise: "Rise, heart, thy Lord is risen;" but is marred by flagrant conceits, though the last three stanzas atone, if only by their music, for the fault:—

> I got me flowers to strew Thy way;
> I got me boughs off many a tree;
> But Thou wast up by break of day,
> And brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee.

Whit-Sunday supplies the critic with an egregious metaphor and other faults; *Trinity Sunday* and *Lent*

are somewhat conventional; and *Christmas* is only relieved by one of the poet's charming instances of child-like realism—his meeting with his divine Lord at an inn. *Holy Baptism* shows again the vice of false ingenuity; *Holy Communion* is subtle and characteristic, but may be thought inferior to *The Banquet*, a poem overflowing with conceits, but of interest as showing Herbert's curiously familiar and affectionate treatment of the Eucharist. We are now told that such endearing phrases are foreign to the genius of Englishmen, and belong properly to the emotional races of the South; but the Englishman of that time was a different being from his phlegmatic offspring of to-day :—

> Welcome, sweet and sacred cheer,
> Welcome dear!
> With me, in me, live and dwell;
> For Thy neatness passeth sight,
> Thy delight
> Passeth tongue to taste or tell.
>
> O what sweetness from the bowl
> Fills my soul,
> Such as is, and makes divine!
> Is some star (fled from the sphere)
> Melted there,
> As we sugar melt in wine?

Herrick or Crashaw might possibly have written like this, though hardly Vaughan. The second and last, however, of Herbert's poems entitled

Love, that closing *The Temple* series, appears to refer to the same sacred Feast; and if so it must be considered by far the best of its kind which he has left us. It is also the most characteristic example of his child-like simplicity and tenderness in dealing with his favourite theme, human unworthiness and the Divine Benignity.

"Herbert's strength of poetical conception," says Professor Courthope, "lies in vivid, and often sublime, renderings of the spiritual aspects of human nature;" and to us this strength may seem oftenest shown in his poems on what might be called the larger philosophical abstractions. Whatever their names, whether unambiguous titles like *Sin*, *Affliction*, and *Constancy*, or such cryptic designations as *The Pulley* or *The Collar*, they appear to afford his imagination more of kindling fire and sustained heat. His short and exquisite *Virtue*, probably the best known of all his verses, is one of this class; though its beautiful imagery makes us too often forget the moral propounded at the close. To omit the poem wholly would be unpardonable; quotation in part would only mar its symmetry; therefore no course remains but complete insertion, superfluous as this may be for most of those who read. Perhaps it is best introduced in the familiar setting of Walton's piscatory discourse:—

"And now, scholar, my direction for fly-fishing is ended with this shower, for it has done raining; and now look about you, and see how pleasantly that meadow looks; nay, and the earth smells as sweetly too. Come, let me tell you what holy Mr. Herbert says of such days and flowers as these; and then we will thank God that we enjoy them, and walk to the river and sit down quietly, and try to catch the other brace of trouts.

Sweet Day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet Rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet Spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives."

It is of course an imperfect poem: some of the conceits are distinctly unpoetical, and some of the words and phrases now out of date; but of its kind it

is an imperishable gem, alike above criticism and praise.

For the reasons already given, the less familiar but more important — indeed, the greatest — of Herbert's poems, *Man*, cannot be left out, though it must close this over-long list of poetical citations. The Miltonic character of the poem has been often noted, as well as its apparent anticipation of modern scientific knowledge. Echoing the amazed admiration of King David and Hamlet—names sufficiently wide apart—for the supreme handiwork of Creation, it implicitly recognises the fact that man and his earthly house have been of united growth : such at least seems to be its incidental teaching. We are part and parcel of the natural scheme of things : man is an animal, if a rational one, with only reason and speech to lift him above his humbler brethren. He is affected by the months and seasons ; by reason of a common origin, the herbs of the field cure his body, even those he tramples under foot. The centre and summit of the world, he is its complete epitome, an atom yet the sum of all :—

> My God, I heard this day
> That none doth build a stately habitation,
> But he that means to dwell therein.
> What house more stately hath there been,
> Or can be, than is Man ? to whose creation
> All things are in decay.

For Man is everything,
And more: he is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is or should be more:
Reason and speech we only bring.
Parrots may thank us, if they are not mute,
They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetry,
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And all to all the world besides;
Each part may call the farthest, brother;
For head with foot hath private amity,
And both with moon and tides.

Nothing hath got so far,
But Man hath caught and kept it, as his prey.
His eyes dismount the highest star;
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

For us the winds do blow;
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow.
Nothing we see but means our good;
As our delight or as our treasure;
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed;
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws:
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind
In their descent and being; to our mind
In their ascent and cause.

Each thing is full of duty:
Waters united are our navigation;
Distinguished, our habitation;
Below, our drink; above, our meat:
Both are our cleanliness. Hath one such beauty?
How then are all things neat!

More servants wait on Man
Than he'll take notice of; in every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
O mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

Since then, my God, Thou hast
So brave a palace built, O dwell in it,
That it may dwell with Thee at last!
Till then afford us so much wit,
That, as the world serves us, we may serve Thee,
And both Thy servants be.

Here, even more than in *The Pulley*, are the "weight, number, and expression of the thoughts" admirable, as well as the "simple dignity" of the language; though again the faults incident to the metaphysical and other verse of the age are apparent—obscurity from over-compression, archaisms, and the like. The lapse, however, into the Ptolemaic astronomy, in the fifth stanza ("For us . . . the earth doth rest, heaven move," etc.), may be regarded as merely rhetorical; the Copernican system having been well established by Herbert's time.

Such explanation as is possible for the sudden and lasting popularity of *The Temple* poems may now, perhaps, be considered as offered. The examples here given, it is hoped, show that they appeal not merely to the plain man, and that the qualities which may be said to have contributed

to the best and happiest hours of the best and happiest people for nearly ten generations, place them among the first of their kind in the language. The common criticism, that their value as religious verse is in excess of their purely literary merits, seems to be easily dealt with. Of the eight score and one poems, short or long, making up *The Temple*, at least twelve are in the very front rank of English poetical compositions, by reason of their strength of invention, excellence of form, and felicity of expression. To *The Church Porch*, and to the shorter poems, *Man*, *Virtue*, *Decay*, *Sin*, *The Quip*, *The Pulley*, *Love Unknown*, *The Pilgrimage*, *The Collar*, *The Elixir*, and the second poem called *Love*, no valid objection can be made on the usual grounds—verbal conceits, false taste, and so on; while their positive merits are beyond praise. Quite as many more—*The Sacrifice*, *The Agony* (a great poem disfigured at the end), *Affliction*, *Constancy*, *The British Church*, *The Holdfast*, *The Flower*, *Aaron*, *The Banquet*, the two *Antiphones*, *Hope*, and several others—are only just below them; while the list of poems containing striking and effective passages or lines might be extended almost indefinitely. The question of "purely literary" value is always a difficult one, and turns largely on individual tastes and opinions; but perhaps the saying of

Matthew Arnold, in his defence of Wordsworth, that the Lake Poet excelled in "the application of ideas to life," applies equally to Herbert. To deal as a poet with the vital facts of life with power and mastery is a great thing ; and Herbert so deals with the facts of the spiritual life. If he is not "simple and sensuous," and sometimes overloads his verses with weighty and trenchant matter, to their poetical hurt, the practice has had its able apologists. "Give me a manly, rough line, with a deal of meaning in it," says Cowper, "rather than a whole poem full of musical periods that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them ;" and the world at large has persistently made the same demand, and will continue to make it. Yet Herbert's lines abound in music ; and he rarely, like Donne, comes under Ben Jonson's censure of deserving to be hanged "for breaking of quantity."

CHAPTER XVI

THE COUNTRY PARSON AND OTHER WRITINGS

"A PASTOR is the deputy of Christ, for the reducing of man to the obedience of God."

The opening sentence of Herbert's best-known work in prose, *A Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson, his Character and Rule of Holy Life*—to give its full title—strikes the same note as the exordium of *The Church Porch;* only here the message is not specially addressed to the sweet and hopeful youth, unless (an unlikely thing in his own day) the youth happens to be in Holy Orders, or intends to be so. As a matter of fact, it was a manual of parochial duties, drawn up chiefly for his own guidance in his Bemerton cure. "Being desirous, through the mercy of God," he says in his short introduction, "to please Him, for Whom I am and live, and Who giveth me my desires and performances; and considering with myself that the way to please Him is to feed my flock diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a pastor's love,

I have resolved to set down the form and character of a true pastor, that I may have a mark to aim at; which also I will set as high as I can, since he shoots higher that threatens the moon than he that aims at a tree."

Although dated 1632 by Herbert in his introduction ("The Author to the Reader"), it was not printed until 1652; when Barnabas Oley, his devoted admirer and former fellow-student at Cambridge, published it in London, together with the poet's collection of proverbs, *Jacula Prudentum*,[1] and a short biographical notice by himself. The general title given to the book was *Herbert's Remains*, and it was followed nearly twenty years later (1671) by a second edition, with a further preface by the same editor. Both of these prefaces by Oley are of interest. The former gives, among other things, some valuable particulars as to Herbert's family, which he calls "generous, noble, and ancient;" his birthplace, and his acquaintance with Nicholas Ferrar. The poet and his remarkable friend, he affirms, "loved each other most entirely . . . yet saw they not each other in many years—I think scarce ever—but as members of one Universitie, in their whole lives." He also gives some details, referred to in a former chapter, of their joint labours in the repair of

[1] First published in 1640, under the title *Outlandish Proverbs, Selected by Mr. G. H.*

A PRIEST
To the
TEMPLE,

OR,
The Countrey PARSON
HIS
CHARACTER,
AND
Rule of Holy Life.

The AUTHOUR,
M^r *G.H.*

LONDON,
Printed by *T. Maxey* for *T. Garthwait*, at the little North door of S^t *Paul's*. 1652.

THE ORIGINAL EDITION
(PUBLISHED WITH *JACULA PRUDENTUM*, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY BARNABAS OLEY)

HERBERT'S Remains.

Or,

SUNDRY

PIECES

Of that ſweet SINGER
of the TEMPLE,

Mr George Herbert,

Sometime
Orator of the Univerſity of
CAMBRIDG.

Now expoſed to publick light.

LONDON,
Printed for *Timothy Garthwait*,
at the little North door of Saint
Paul's. 1652.

THE GENERAL TITLE UNDER WHICH *THE COUNTRY PARSON* AND *JACULA PRUDENTUM* WERE INCLUDED

Leighton Church, with his (entirely just) estimate of the relative merits of the *Parentalia* and *The Temple* poems. In his second preface, consisting largely of counsels to his fellow-clergymen to follow the pattern of life set forth in the book, he mentions Ferrar's friend, Mr. Edmund Duncon, as "the good man that was possessor of the manuscript," and caused it to be printed, for the benefit of the clergy and the Church; thus confirming, or anticipating, Walton's story of its publication. It is also of interest as showing the importance attached by his contemporaries to the fact of Herbert's high birth; though his editor, an Archdeacon, is at pains to prove, by a long list of noblemen, with their sons, brothers, and other near relatives, who had taken Orders in the English Church, that his case was not without precedent. He even instances Henry VIII., who, before the death of his elder brother, Prince Arthur, was intended by his father for the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

If Herbert in his sermons carefully instructed his flock in all matters relating to public worship, especially their behaviour in Church, he is equally minute in his directions, or rather exhortations, to their spiritual guides. That he regarded the position even of a country clergyman as one of high responsibility, need not be said. The thirty-seven

chapters of his manual treat his office, or offices, with a fulness little short of exhaustive; and the curate of souls who grudged the twelve pence necessary for its purchase was certainly deserving of blame. Beginning with a definition, as, according to a Roman author, every rational discourse should do, the different chapters suggest Bacon's essays in more ways than one: they are short and full of sententious matter, homely, if not home-spun in much of their diction, and also, although in this hardly characteristic of Bacon, sometimes amusing. They throw, too, a good deal of light on Herbert's position as a Churchman, a position not so easy to define as many have assumed. Those of the Low Church party, if such regrettable distinctions must be made, who have claimed him for their own, are hardly supported by his first chapter. Here, as in his poem entitled *The Priesthood*, he asserts without compromise the high prerogatives of his Order: "the dignity, in that a priest *may* do that which Christ did, and by His authority and as His viceregent; the duty, in that a priest *is* to do that which Christ did, and after His manner, both for doctrine and life." On the other hand, the High Churchmen who, with more reason, have attached him to their side, and proclaimed him a forerunner of the Anglo-Catholic Priest of to-day, must admit that

in several important respects he differed from their present ideals, as many of these would certainly have provoked his condemnation.

The interests of *The Country Parson*, however, do not hinge on points of ritual or particular doctrine; and having defined the character of a pastor in his first chapter, if chapter it may be called, Herbert proceeds in his second to consider the diversities of his kind. "The reverend prelates of the Church," he modestly refrains from instructing in their duties: of the others, "some," he says, "live in the Universities, some in noble houses, some in parishes, residing on their cures." As might be supposed, he has something to say of the academic species, with whom he had reason to be familiar; and especially of "those in a preparatory way," whom he advises "not to think that when they have read the Fathers or Schoolmen, a minister is made, and the thing done;" while those who are domestic chaplains he counsels "not to be over-submissive and base, but to keep up with the lord and lady of the house, and to preserve a boldness with them all, even so far as reproof to their very faces when occasion calls, but seasonably and discreetly." He is, however, chiefly concerned with the rural Priest, and the manner of his ministry. "The country Parson," he says in his third discourse, "is exceeding exact

in his life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave, in all his ways." He is particularly careful to avoid anything that may scandalise his parish : covetousness, drunkenness, and the breaking of promises. "As for oaths and apparel," he concludes, "the disorders thereof are also very manifest. The Parson's yea is yea, and nay, nay ; and his apparel plain, but reverend and clean, without spots, or dust, or smell ; the purity of his mind breaking out and dilating itself even to his body, clothes, and habitation." Herbert's regard for dress in his undergraduate days has been mentioned ; and he insists also on personal purity in one of the quaintest stanzas of *The Church Porch* :—

> Affect in things about thee cleanliness,
> That all may gladly board thee, as a flower.
> Slovens take up their stock of noisomeness
> Beforehand, and anticipate their last hour.
> Let thy mind's sweetness have his operation
> Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.

The chapters dealing with the Pastor's intellectual and spiritual equipment are of singular interest. "The country Parson," says Herbert, "is full of all knowledge," and "condescends even to the knowledge of tillage and pasturage . . . because people by what they understand are best led to what they understand not. But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the Book of

books, the storehouse and magazine of life and comfort,—the Holy Scriptures. There he sucks and lives." Yet, in an age that glorified the Bible as the only and sufficient agent of human regeneration, he insists that "a holy life" is indispensable to its right interpretation, and should go before its study. Also, he asserts what savours curiously of ultra-modern if not "higher" criticism, that there have been other revelations; "that God in all ages hath had His servants, to whom He hath revealed His truth . . . and that as one country doth not bear all things, that there may be a commerce, so neither hath God opened or will open all to one, that there may be a traffic in knowledge between the servants of God for the planting both of love and humility." Here the nascent Broad Churchman seems to speak; but his mind is sufficiently Catholic. "The country Parson hath read the Fathers also," he says in the chapter following, "and the Schoolmen and the later writers, or a good proportion of all, out of all which he hath compiled a book of divinity, which is the storehouse of his sermons." To catechising he gives special attention, as well as to cases of conscience. The latter are an important part of the priestly vocation; "for every one," he explains, "hath not digested when it is a sin to take something for money lent, or when not; when it is

a fault to discover another's fault, or when not; when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means or honour be a sin of covetousness or ambition, and when not;" with many other difficult points of parochial casuistry.

The minute attention he gives, in his sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, to the clergyman's method of conducting the service, and to the congregation's demeanour under his ministrations, points strongly to a widespread disorganisation of public worship, and the general need of reform. Altogether, indeed, the whole teaching and preaching of the more able and learned divines of the period—in fact, from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign to the Restoration, and even for some time after—indicate the same conditions: a decay of the devout sentiment and feeling generated under the old religious order, and the necessity, more or less consciously recognised, of laying their foundations afresh. The model priest, by Herbert's injunctions, is as careful of his pulpit manner as of his matter. In his public prayers, he "composeth himself to all possible reverence, lifting up his heart and hands and eyes, and using all other gestures which may express a hearty and unfeigned devotion." "His voice is humble, his words treatable and slow, yet not so slow neither . . . but with a grave liveliness, between fear and

zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performs his duty." Nor is he less mindful of the carriage of his rural flock, whom he has sedulously instructed in the outward decencies. He "exacts of them all possible reverence, by no means enduring either talking, or sleeping, or gazing, or leaning, or half kneeling, or any undutiful behaviour in them, but causing them when they sit, or stand, or kneel, to do all in a straight and steady posture, as attending to what is done in the Church." Their "Amens" and other responses also "are to be done not in a huddling or slubbering fashion, gaping, or scratching the head, or spitting even in the midst of their answer, but gently and pausably, thinking what they say." These are fundamentals indeed; but his oversight is not to be confined to the humbler sheep of his fold. "If there be any of the gentry or nobility of the parish, who sometimes make it a piece of state not to come at the beginning of service with their poor neighbours, but at mid-prayers . . . he by no means suffers it, but after divers gentle admonitions, if they persevere, he causes them to be presented;[1] or if his poor churchwardens be affrighted with their greatness . . . he presents them himself." In the matter of preaching he is at one with the Puritans, and will have no "dumb

[1] Before the Ordinary—the Bishop, or some other Ecclesiastical Censor.

dogs" in the Church. "The country Parson," he affirms, "preacheth constantly; the pulpit is his joy and his throne." He uses all the arts of oratory, and draws no bow at a venture, aiming his exhortations specifically at the old or the young, the rich or the poor, with: "This is for you, and this is for you." At times he enlivens his discourse with stories; "for them also men heed and remember better than exhortations," especially country people, "which are thick and heavy, and hard to raise to a point of zeal and fervency, and need a mountain of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember." The length of his sermons, he directs, shall not exceed an hour in preaching, "because all ages have thought that a competency." His Sundays are filled with diversified labours: in them he "seems to himself so as a market man is when market day comes, or a shopkeeper when customers use to come in."

Turning to his private condition of life, the model Parson, "considering that virginity is a higher state than matrimony," is preferably unmarried. "But yet . . . as the temper of his parish may be, where he may have occasion to converse with women, and that among suspicious men . . . he is rather married than unmarried." He chooses his wife "rather by his ear than his eye; his judgment, not his affection;" and while giving her

"half at least of the government of the house," he periodically "looks how things go," and demands an account of her stewardship, "the oftener or the seldomer, according as he is satisfied of his wife's discretion." His house he rules with the strictness of a martinet; his children with "more love than terror," his servants with more "terror than love." His furniture is "very plain, but clean, whole, and sweet, as sweet as his garden can make; for he hath no money for such things." The household dietary is "plain and common, but wholesome; what he hath is little, but very good; it consisteth most of mutton, beef, and veal; if he adds anything for a great day or a stranger, his garden or his orchard supplies it, or his barn or yard." His fasts are kept in the spirit rather than the letter: an unpleasant piece of dried flesh, he points out, is more of the nature of a fast than a palatable piece of fish.

His chapter entitled *The Parson's Church* may be given with little abridgment, as showing the modest minimum of adornment, and the like, deemed necessary for the "beauty of holiness" by a clergyman of the school of Andrewes and Laud at that time, probably about the year 1632:—

"The country Parson hath a special care of his Church, that all things there be decent, and befitting His name by which it is called. Therefore,

first, he takes order that all things be in good repair; as walls plastered, windows glazed, floor paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the pulpit, and desk, and Communion Table, and font, be as they ought for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the Church be swept and kept clean, without dust or cobwebs, and at great festivals strewed and stuck with boughs, and perfumed with incense. Thirdly, that there be fit and proper texts of Scripture everywhere painted, and that all the painting be grave and reverend, not with light colours or foolish antics. Fourthly, that all the books appointed by authority be there, and those not torn or fouled, but whole, and clean, and well bound; and that there be a fitting and sightly Communion cloth of fine linen, with a handsome and seemly carpet of good and costly stuff or cloth, and all kept sweet and clean, in a strong and decent chest, with a chalice and cover, and a stoup or flagon, and a basin for alms and offerings; besides which he hath a poor man's box conveniently seated to receive the charity of well-minded people, and to lay up treasures for the sick and needy. And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness, and as following the Apostle's two great

and admirable rules in things of this nature: the first whereof is, 'Let all things be done decently and in order;' the second, 'Let all things be done to edification' (1 Cor. xiv.)."

In *The Parson in Sacraments*, his acceptance of the doctrine of the Real Presence is explicitly stated: "Especially at Communion times he is in great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break and administer Him." Of the manner of receiving, a much and fiercely debated question of the time, he says: "The feast indeed requireth sitting, because it is a feast; but man's unpreparedness asks kneeling. He that comes to the Sacraments hath the confidence of a guest, and he that kneels confesseth himself an unworthy one, and therefore differs from other feasters; but he that sits or lies puts up to an Apostle." He adds, however, the just comment that "contentiousness in a feast of charity is more scandal than any posture." As to the frequency of the Communion, he says "the Parson celebrates it, if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times a year; as at Easter, Christmas, Whitsuntide, before and after harvest, and the beginning of Lent." In baptising, "he willingly and cheerfully crosseth the child, and thinketh the ceremony not only innocent but reverend." He also instructs godfathers and godmothers "that it is

no complimental or light thing to sustain that place."

The model Parson's relations to his flock, as described by Herbert, might be called those of a benevolent paternal despot. *The Parson as a Father* is the title of one of his chapters, *The Parson in God's Stead* another ; while in that entitled *The Parson's Completeness* the functions of a lawyer and a physician are added to his parochial obligations. That he should urge upon his rural clergyman the cure of the bodies as well as souls of his parishioners is in keeping with the bent of his family. All the Herberts seem to have been accomplished herbalists : Edward, it will be remembered, considered it especially worthy of a gentleman to be a "good botanic ;" and his parson brother declares that in the knowledge of simples "the manifold wisdom of God is wonderfully to be seen." The rural Priest's acquaintance with agriculture must be extended to garden curatives ; "for home-bred medicines are both more easy for the Parson's purse, and more familiar for all men's bodies." Therefore, for the apothecary's rhubarb and bolearmena, he substitutes damask or white roses, plantain, shepherd's-purse, knot-grass and other home-grown remedies ; while at his table he condemns foreign spices "for vanities, and so shuts them out of his family, esteeming that

there is no spice comparable for herbs to rosemary, thyme, savory, mints ; and for seeds to fennel and caraway-seeds. Accordingly, for salves, his wife seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums."

Separate chapters are devoted to the Parson's courtesy and charity, to his journeys, his library, and the like. His offices as a friend, comforter, and moral sentinel, and as an encourager of good works, are also dwelt on, together with his functions as a reprover and punisher of wrong-doers, a composer of quarrels, and a promoter of brotherly love. While, however, he is chiefly concerned with the poorer part of his flock, he by no means neglects those of higher station. Every one in his parish must be employed ; and the gentry have their special duties. On them he strongly urges public offices, in particular that of "the commission of peace." "No commonwealth in the world," says George Herbert, "hath a braver institution than that of justices of the peace . . . wherefore it behoves all who are come to the gravity and ripeness of judgment for so excellent a place, not to refuse, but rather to procure it." The country gentleman must frequent the sessions and assizes in order to know the law of the land, "for," he adds with his usual keenness, "our law is practice." Also, when there is a Parliament, "he is to

endeavour by all means to be a knight or burgess there, for there is no school to a Parliament." With his brother Edward, he insists on martial exercise: "every morning that he is at home he must either ride the great horse or exercise some of his military postures." To the younger brothers whom the Parson finds not engaged in any profession by their parents, "whose neglect in this point is intolerable," and who spend their time "in dressing, complimenting, visiting, and sporting," he commends the study of the civil law, and of mathematics, "as the only wonder-working knowledge," especially navigation and fortification. But the young gallants who think these courses "dull and phlegmatic" are to be shipped off without ado to the American plantations.

On the whole, George Herbert's ideal of a country parish priest—or minister, for the terms were then used interchangeably, as they are still in the Prayer Book—is an admirable one, in spite of his pragmatic zeal and amiable tyrannies. "A cultivated gentleman in every parish" has long been the desideratum for an Anglican diocese; and Herbert supplied his model for all time, at the low price of a shilling. Whether, as Walton intimates, and he himself implies in his introduction, the book was written before actually entering upon his cure, or after some experience of its duties,

is not clear ; though its original date (1632) suggests the latter possibility. The former supposition, however, seems the more probable ; as some of his theories, especially that of enforcing love and neighbourly feeling by law, might not have stood the test of trial. But practical or not, their aim is wholly benevolent : the country Parson is always the poor man's friend and champion, though not less the wise counsellor of the rich ; and his parish, with its well-kept Church, and its mint, rosemary and thyme growing up side by side with the Christian virtues, could hardly fail, if in any measure realised, to have been a small paradise on earth.

Several of Herbert's less-known writings have already been mentioned—the *Epigrams* defending the English Church, the *Parentalia*, the Cambridge *Orations*, and others. *The Church Militant*, a poem of some length originally bound with *The Temple*, is of interest from containing the lines objected to by the Vice-Chancellor of his University, to whom Ferrar had applied for a license to publish the book. Doubtless, the whole of the following passage was complained of, as the suggested flight of Christianity to the Separatists of New England would hardly be relished by the ecclesiastical authorities at home :—

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand.
When height of malice and prodigious lusts,
Impudent sinning, witchcrafts, and distrusts—
The marks of future bane—shall fill our cup
Unto the brim, and make our measure up;
When Seine shall swallow Tiber, and the Thames,
By letting in them both, pollutes her streams;
When Italy of us shall have her will,
And all her calendar of sins fulfil;
Whereby one may foretell what sins next year
Shall both in France and England domineer;
Then shall Religion to America flee;
They have their times of Gospel, e'en as we.

But he is careful to say that religion shall not escape from moral evil by emigration :—

Yet as the Church shall thither westward fly,
So Sin shall trace and dog her instantly.

Herbert's collection of proverbs, *Jacula Prudentum*[1] (republished with the 1652 edition of *The Country Parson*), consists of over a thousand short proverbs of more or less merit. If, as their title implies, they were really selected by him, they are on the whole typical of his genius, which as we have seen always delighted in pithy and sententious utterances. The *Preface* and *Notes* supplied by him to Ferrar's translation of Valdesso's *Divine Considerations* (published in 1638) are chiefly noteworthy for the confidence of his theological judgments : they also

[1] See *ante*, p. 290.

OVTLANDISH PROVERBS, SELECTED By Mr. G. H.

LONDON,

Printed by T. P. for *Humphrey Blunden*; at the *Caſtle in Corn-hill*. 1640.

THE TITLE UNDER WHICH *JACULA PRUDENTUM* WAS FIRST PUBLISHED

raise the question, suggested by his letter to his mother in her sickness, not when he became a completely furnished divine, but whether he was ever anything else. The wonder he expresses to his friend, "that God in the midst of Popery should open the eyes of one to understand and express so clearly and excellently the intent of the Gospel," was doubtless shared by Ferrar himself, who, as a visitor to Gidding once reported, strongly affirmed his belief that the Pope was really Anti-Christ. Again, Herbert's translation from the Latin of *A Treatise of Temperance and Sobriety*, written by Ludivico Cornaro, a noble Venetian, and published by Ferrar in 1634, is also in keeping with his character, as shown by the attention given to matters of diet in his letters, poems, and elsewhere.

Among Herbert's English poems is a small collection of religious pieces lately discovered in manuscript and now included in his *Works*, under the title of *Lilies of the Temple*. A number of metrical translations or renderings of the *Psalms* are also attributed to him, with verses on Lord Danvers and Sir John Danvers: he is credited as well with a curious poem called *A Paradox*, and one addressed, like Sir Henry Wotton's courtly masterpiece, to the Queen of Bohemia. His Classical poems, besides the much-discussed *Re-*

sponsoriae (to Melville) and the *Parentalia*, include those referring to Lord Bacon, Donne, and King James, an *Epigram* from Martial, and a poem on the death of Queen Anne of Denmark, with two others on the death of Prince Henry of Wales. Two collections of Latin epigrams, entitled *Passio Discerpta* and *Lucus;* the former, like his English poem, *The Sacrifice*, dealing with the events of the Passion, the latter consisting of secular and religious pieces intermingled, have been rescued from manuscript and published. The literary quality of his Classical compositions need not be discussed here: by competent authorities his Latin and Greek poems have been pronounced "admirable, but not equal to Milton's." His brother, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, considered his English works, though "rare in their kind . . . far short of expressing those perfections he had in the Greek and Latin tongue:" time, however, has reversed the verdict, and it is on his English verse that his fame as a poet must now rest.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

GEORGE HERBERT'S life and work have appealed to his fellow men and women in different times under many aspects. Some have been attracted by the theologian, some by the Churchman, some by the philosopher, some by the poet—a few, possibly, by the affectionate son and brother revealed in his family letters. To others, his example as a religious courtier has offered a strong fascination; this may be called the genteel aspect of his message, with that of Ferrar and his other associates.

"What seems to have been the peculiar mission of Herbert and of his fellows," says Mr. Shorthouse, in the Preface to his edition of *The Temple*, "is that they showed the English people what a fine gentleman, who was also a Christian and a Churchman, might be. They set the tone of the Church of England, and they revealed, with no inefficient or temporary effect, to the uncultured and unlearned the true refinement of worship.

They united delicacy of taste in their choice of ornament and of music with culture of expression and reserve, and they showed that this was not incompatible with devoted life and work."

To the author of *John Inglesant* this might have seemed the great lesson which the well-bred and cultured Anglicans of that day had to teach. Undoubtedly, it was one of the lessons; but so far as Herbert himself is concerned it appears a somewhat limited view of the truth. The "fine gentleman" is the smallest if it is any part of the George Herbert revealed in *The Temple;* and it was chiefly by *The Temple* that he impressed his age. As we have seen, both Walton and Oley were influenced by his high birth; but the staunch Nonconformist, Richard Baxter, who "next the Scripture poems" found "none so savoury" as Herbert's, was probably not affected by their author's gentility; nor, it may be conceived, were the majority of their twenty thousand purchasers. The true key to their popular success is to be found in Walton's words, in which he describes *The Temple* as a book in which its author, "by declaring his own spiritual conflicts . . . hath comforted and raised many a dejected and discomposed soul, and charmed them into sweet and quiet thoughts." It was the spiritual man rather than the gentleman in *The Temple* poems which

appealed to minds so widely sundered as those of Crashaw and Cowper, Charles I. and Henry Vaughan, Archbishop Leighton and S. T. Coleridge, and which, in comparatively modern times, has commended them to the wider English-speaking world, with little regard to social or sectarian differences.

The very catholicity of Herbert's message as a poet, however, has led to no small confusion as to his ecclesiastical position, a proof, perhaps, of the real breath of genius. All ranks and grades of the religious, from the most ardent Catholic within the Anglican fold to the most ultra-Protestant without, have, as it has been said, found him one of themselves, by reason of various points of spiritual likeness or affinity. The modern High Churchman sees in his reverence for holy places, and for holy offices and seasons, in his definite pronouncements on the subject of the Priesthood, and in his ordered life and devotions, the true signs of a forerunner of the Oxford Movement. The extreme Protestant, on the other hand, discovers in the solitary soul, reasoning and even wrestling with its Maker, in the clear vision of the hatefulness of sin, and in the sensitive conscience, ever engaged in its

> cold dispute
> Of what is fit and not,

the faithful reflection of himself and his own moral conflicts; and he is not seldom surprised by the further discovery that these attributes, which should belong to a prophet of the desert, clad in skins and living on locusts, are those of a man in a canonical coat, who, if the truth were told, is little better than one of the sacerdotalists. Perhaps, therefore, we may say that Herbert's true message was one of reconciliation, illustrating the essential unity of all spiritual experience.

Yet, although no poet has ever pierced deeper into the heart of spiritual things, or handled them with greater boldness, he has been described as recoiling from the more strenuous religious currents of his age, and feeding his faith on the outward symbols and ordinances of Catholicism. Even the late J. R. Green speaks of him as starting back from "the bare, intense spiritualism of the Puritan" to nourish his religious instincts on the outer associations of Catholic tradition; but this is certainly not the Herbert disclosed in *The Temple* and *The Country Parson.* In his poems, he is much more concerned with the elemental fires that try and refine the soul, than with material aids to devotion. It is true that he has a profound reverence for holy places; but with him it is the spirit that consecrates the place, and the place merely reflects the consecrating spirit—indeed, he ex-

pressly warns his country Priest against "putting a holiness in the things." Bare, intense spiritualism is his own distinguishing mark; and the whole effort of his being might be described as the attempt to solve the two great mysteries of the ages:—

> Philosophers have measured mountains,
> Fathomed the depth of seas, of states, and kings:
> Walked with a staff to heaven, and tracèd fountains;
> But there are two vast, spacious things,
> The which to measure it doth more behove:
> Yet there are few that sound them,—Sin and Love.

His character, as presented by his more intimate writings, is that of a man of strong intellect and high ambitions, by no means unworldly or without human passions, perfected and humanised by disappointment, suffering, and self-subjection. With him the note of conflict, of perpetual warfare against natural bias and inclination, is everywhere present: he is the most militant if not the most combative of saints. And herein lies the seeming paradox of the association of his name with things of beauty, rest, and peace—with the quiet of country churchyards, the freshness of summer skies and mornings, the solemn stillness of the chancel and the altar. It is, however, the familiar paradox of the natural world. We do not perceive or understand the price paid for the apparent repose of Nature: that what seems to us an inert,

effortless calm, is really the resultant of a thousand active forces: that our dreaming planet moves in a very whirlpool of dust and broken fragments of the cosmos: and that the peace of our fields, in more senses than one, is the outcome of "battles long ago."

But, spiritual gladiator and severe moralist as he is, Herbert is the most human and kindly of ascetics, full of friendliness, neighbourliness, and small courtesies. Who else could have written—

> Be useful where thou livest, that they may
> Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
> Kindness, great parts, great places, are the way
> To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,
> And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
> To the one joy of doing kindnesses?

What poet, again, has ever drawn his images, and the illustrations of his themes, from Nature with a gentler or happier hand?—

> How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
> Are Thy returns! ev'n as the flowers in Spring.
> To which, besides their own demean,
> The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring;
> Grief melts away
> Like snow in May,
> As if there were no such cold thing.

And who, again, has ever shown a more tender love and concern for the members of his father's household, as their counsellor and helper in worldly affairs, not less than in suffering and bereavement?

Of his genius perhaps enough has been said. The pen-knife "wit" in its narrow sheath, "too thoughtful" and "too sharp for his body," he evidently felt to be an uncomfortable possession, and one which he could not always guide, despite the fastidious correction of his verses shown by his existing manuscripts. The common criticism, however, that his genius greatly exceeded his taste, can only be accepted with qualifications; for if many of his poems show a primitive force not always ruled by art, a large proportion of them disclose an essential mastery of the elements of true poetry, of which taste in the choice of words, images, and adornments, is assuredly one. His defective pieces, of which the number is not small, may be left to the enemy, who will make the most of them in the future as he has in the past; but there are gems in some of the worst; and as Browning says of Wordsworth, we may safely leave his work "to operate in the world as it may, *each recipient his own selector.*"

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